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ABSTRACT

Part A of the Education Commission's report presents materials that provide background and general support for its recommendations concerning various aspects of Oberlin's educational program. It discusses change in higher education and goals that may be associated with the College. It believes that Oberlin should seek internal agreements on the means by which the values of educational excellence and cultural diversity can best be advanced and should seek students and faculty members in ways consistent with these agreements. The Commission also examines the significance of a B.A. degree from the College. Part B of the report deals with specific proposals for reform in the areas of curriculum, structure, evaluation and environment. These reforms are intended to increase Oberlin's flexibility. (Author/CS)

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The Education Commission

Oberlin College

PRELIMINARY REPORT

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PART A

BACKGROUND

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PREFACE

What follows is Part A of the Preliminary Report which the Education Commission offers to members of the Oberlin College community in accordance with the mandate given to it in the fall of 1970. This first part of our Report is a presentation of materials meant to provide background and general support for our recommendations concerning various aspects of the College's educational program. Discussions which deal directly with our specific recommendations are contained in an accompanying document titled Part B of our Report.

The general theme implicit in both parts of our Report is that of educational opportunity at Oberlin. In Part A we are concerned first to remark briefly upon change in higher education in general, and then to discuss goals that may be associated with Oberlin College and with individuals in pursuit of education. We also provide here a discussion of the goals the Commission has taken to guide its work in different areas of our educational program. Finally, we attempt a "perspective" on change at Oberlin, in which we offer an account of why we have taken these goals as our guides.

The nature of the materials presented here leads us to accompany them with a modest disclaimer. In what follows we present thoughts which are theoretical in character, and in some ways philosophical. The present document, then, may not be of a kind which a large group of persons can be expected to produce so as to express the thoughts of all of its members with precision. Nevertheless, the task that was given to the Commission is such that members of the community will have a legitimate interest in our views on goals and on educational change. Our discussion here attempts to respond to that interest. The present document has not been "voted" on in the Commission, for its contents are not of a sort that allow agreement to be expressed in that way. But the Commission has agreed that the present statement of views should be issued as background material for its recommendations.

This draft has been prepared by the staff of the Commission, based upon working papers from certain of its sub-groups, and has been reworked in light of comments and criticisms submitted by its members. We have also received very helpful discussions of the views it expresses from other members of the Oberlin community. For these latter we are most grateful. We hope the present draft shows that we have attempted to respond to those discussions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years the academic community in America has more and more often been urged to review and rethink the nature of higher education and the ways in which it is offered in our many different kinds of institutions. The request to review educational programs and practices is not itself new. Most institutions have some means of keeping what they do and how they do it under a form of surveillance. What is new in the experience of recent years is the growing pressure to rethink education with the intention of changing it in sharp and visible ways. There is a demand for radical change--something more than reform--and this, understandably, is alarming to some, invigorating to others.

The causes of this increasing pressure are numerous and complex, though much recent literature on the subject is more simplistic than helpful. One main type of explanation is, in one way or other, political in nature. Some accounts of this type are ideological, and start from a basic indictment of American "capitalist" society. Some of the turbulence on campuses has centered around issues that, on the surface, appear trivial, though to those concerned they may, at bottom, involve basic problems of national and local politics, internal governance, relationships of educational institutions to other parts of society, content and style of curriculum, and the evaluational and socializing functions of educational institutions. In general, an indictment of American society does not itself directly suggest what changes in higher education would be desirable and legitimate, though, in its various forms, it has had the capacity to produce a good deal of thinking about alternatives to our present system.

In fact, whatever the history of turbulence on this or that campus, it appears generally (if not universally) that colleges and universities are attempting to respond to, rather than ignore, the pressures for change. Some, due to size, traditions, or other factors, find it easier to respond than others. It may be suggested, without cynicism, that on some campuses the willingness to respond may be a by-product of what is proffered as a second main line of explanation of the pressures to change, namely, a decline in financial health. Many schools, especially those in the increasingly competitive private sector of American higher education, now find themselves either in or approaching serious financial difficulty, and one can see how this might prompt a review of the attractiveness of the educational "product" they offer.

A third kind of explanation is expressed in the vocabulary of individual freedom, need, and responsibility, and involves a challenge to liberal arts institutions to respond to the interests of their students rather than require that they conform to a traditional conception of a liberal arts education. This account may reflect a familiar demand in American political and corporate life to extend participation in decision-making to those affected by the decisions made. It may also reflect a sense of loss of consensus on basic values in our collective life generally. In any case, it puts a familiar way of thinking about the liberal arts degree into question, and is, hence, of special importance to liberal arts institutions.

The common vehicle by which institutions are considering how to change has been a representative internal committee, consisting of faculty members, students, and administrators. Such committees have recently been in operation at several prominent colleges and universities, including Berkeley, Duke, the University of New Hampshire, Swarthmore, the University of Toronto, Michigan State, Wesleyan, Stanford, and Brown. While the details of the results of their work are not uniform, there seems to be a common emphasis on seeking changes in the areas of the format in which education is offered (the thrice-weekly lecture course is a regular object of dismay), the system of advising and counselling (seen regularly as too impersonal and lacking in attention to long-range life goals), the content of the curriculum (usually considered lacking in interdisciplinary studies and activities relevant to personal growth and social action), the different practices of evaluation involved in earning a degree (some viewed as not close or deep enough, others as oppressive or simply unnecessary), and the institution's administrative structure (often seen as either too "distant" and bureaucratic, or as too burdened with committees to be efficient). In the fall of 1970 Princeton established a "Commission on the Future of the College" which is to deliberate for two years; a similar group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has recently issued the first part of its report.

Institutions have responded in various ways to the pressures for change. Dartmouth has recently changed its academic calendar in the direction of year-round operation both for financial reasons and to make its opportunity for education available to greater numbers of students. Calendar experiments of other sorts, designed primarily to increase flexibility in the educational program are underway at Western College, Colorado College, and Mount Vernon College in Washington, D.C. Bennington has just changed its requirements and grading procedures, and Yale has moved to a "guideline policy" in place of distribution requirements. New College (Florida) has recently committed itself to a system of "contracted studies" in a three-year B.A. program directly responsive to a student's interests and without distribution, major, or language requirements. Other schools, such as New York University and Harvard, are discussing the feasibility of implementing the Carnegie Commission's recent proposal for a three-year bachelor's degree. The University of Chicago and many other schools are undertaking full reviews of the undergraduate curriculum.

The purpose of these few remarks about change in higher education is not to mount an argument for change at Oberlin. It is simply to take note of an increasing concern in colleges and universities for the quality, goals, and attractiveness of their educational programs and practices, in the context of pressures for radical change. The isolated responses of complicated and differently structured institutions with various capacities and resources do not, of course, bespeak their own general validity. But the facts that concern for higher education is becoming more and more widespread, and that much attention is being given to possibilities for change in it, will reinforce our own natural tendency to be occupied with the quality of education at Oberlin and to be responsive to ways of improving it.

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2. GOALS

2.1. Introduction. Perhaps the natural point of departure for an introduction to a program of educational change for Oberlin College is a discussion of goals. In what follows we offer a discussion in which we attempt to do more than list general aims uncritically juxtaposed. We distinguish first between goals that can be ascribed to Oberlin College in virtue of the fact that it can be viewed from a number of legitimate but very different perspectives, and those that can be claimed to be the proper aims of the pursuit of education by individuals. We then describe the specific goals of the Education Commission as they are related to different aspects of our educational program, and, finally, we offer an introduction to our account, in Chapter 3, of why we have taken these to be our specific goals.

2.2. The goals of Oberlin College. In fact, the goals of Oberlin College are as numerous as there are categories of description which legitimately apply to the different practices which make up our enterprise. In general, these categories represent different roles the College plays in the context of a larger society. Some of the most important of these categories--but certainly not all of them--are these:

(a) As a liberal arts institution the central goal of the College is to provide the best opportunity its various resources allow for interested individuals to gain a liberal arts education, and to do so without artificial or irrelevant forms of discrimination--such as those involving race, sex, age, or economic circumstances--toward the individuals to whom it makes that opportunity available.

As a conservatory of music the central goal of the College is to provide the best opportunity its resources permit for interested individuals to prepare themselves to enter, in one capacity or other, the profession of music--again, without artificial or irrelevant restrictions regarding those to whom it makes that opportunity available.

As both a liberal arts institution and a conservatory of music the College has, and is in a privileged position to achieve, a special internal goal, namely, the enhancement of opportunities for liberal arts education and education in music through mutual cooperation and reciprocal access between its two main educational bodies.

(b) As a center of learning the goals of the College extend beyond provision of opportunities for liberal arts education and education in music. They include both fostering and maintaining traditions of art, scholarship, and performance, and at the same time stimulating imaginative and creative new ventures in those areas. They also include encouraging the development of humane and effective responses to human problems, and facilitating progress in whatever terms are appropriate to different fields of intellectual and artistic life.

(c) As a community of individuals whose intellectual and artistic interests and needs coincide in different ways the College has as a goal the provision of an environment which contributes positively to pursuit of those interests and satisfaction of those needs.

(d) As a corporate citizen its goals include effective contribution to the public good, through relationships with such other sectors of organized society as public education, government, and business, as consistent with its basic educational enterprise and the shared interests of its members.

(e) Finally, as a public model of conscience in the society of which it is a part, the College seeks to exemplify in the conduct of its affairs the values that ought to inspire a free and culturally diverse society and to reflect these values in all aspects of its educational program and on all levels of its membership.

2.3. The aims of education. Beyond the various goals the College may be said to have in virtue of the different roles it plays in society, there are further questions which concern the aims individuals may have in choosing to pursue education at Oberlin. These further questions are of different kinds. We may recognize first that for many--surely most--individuals the pursuit of education will, in part, serve an external purpose. For example, a conservatory student's purpose may be to enter the world of professional music as a performer, a composer, an historian, or a teacher. Another student may view his pursuit of liberal arts education as preparation for advanced study in an academic field, or for admission to a professional school of law or medicine, or for employment in government, business, or social service. An individual's having such an external purpose does not, of course, preclude his viewing his pursuit of education as an activity which is valuable in itself. But there is no central one among such individual external purposes that the College, as an institution, is obliged to respect or encourage over others.

But there is an important question of another kind about the aims of education as viewed from the standpoint of individuals. In the specific context of our institution the question focusses on the nature and character of liberal arts education. Given that persons have different external purposes in pursuing liberal arts education, what, in general, is there about education of that sort which makes it valuable to them? What is intrinsically valuable about liberal arts education, aside from the different vocational and professional purposes different individuals may believe it serves?

Our answer to this question is a reaffirmation of the kind of answer which has traditionally been given by Oberlin College. The answer involves reference to those capacities for knowledge, understanding, and appreciation the development of which has always been associated with the pursuit of liberal arts education. These capacities are distinctively human, and their development may be thought of as a measure of an individual's humanity.

Although by no means definitive a list of such capacities would probably include:

A commitment to the search for truth through the attempt to find the answers to significant problems and questions.

Skill in using different modes of inquiry and expression.

The capacity to interrelate the various disciplines in which knowledge is structured.

Resourcefulness and willingness to experiment creatively in approaching problems and questions.

The ability to integrate the intellectual, emotional, artistic, and physical elements in all learning.

The ability to unite theory with responsible action.

Sensitivity to human relationships and to the needs of others.

Confidence and integrity in working independently and skill in working with others.

An understanding of one's own and other cultures.

Enjoyment of the individual and social experiences of daily life.

A deepening of self-understanding and personal identity.

The realization that a mark of the educated person is the desire and capacity for self-education throughout one's lifetime.

Our view is that a liberal arts education can and should stimulate the development of these capacities and abilities, and that its intrinsic value lies in its power to do so.

2.4. Two values: educational excellence and cultural diversity. Oberlin's graduates face a world of increasing complexity, a world in which problems appear to multiply faster than solutions despite an explosive growth in knowledge, a world filled with threats to the very existence of mankind. Our students must be equipped to meet the intellectual and emotional challenges that will confront them as individuals in such an environment, and, more, to assume roles of active leadership in their communities and the world. The capacities and abilities we have listed are conditions of a person's meeting such challenges and of carrying the burden of such leadership.

Members of the College community are also occupied in a search for personal values, directions, and educational and life goals. They are concerned with larger environments, and with how to identify the needs of persons as individuals, as members of groups (such as our own College community), and as participants in the life of the nation and the world. As part of this concern for values many among us seek to understand how the College itself can affect the wider communities to which it is related, so that as a corporate citizen and public model of conscience it can act in humane and responsible ways. In the development of an individual's concern for values an important ingredient is an awareness of problems in the larger society and the cultural diversity it contains. Oberlin's long tradition of respect for the contributions of persons from all backgrounds, and its continuing quest for ways of being effective in responding to the special needs of members of minority groups, are themselves positive supporting factors for the efforts of individuals to discover and formulate values for themselves.

The most interesting educational institutions of the coming decade--and the soundest ones educationally--will be those in which two values, educational excellence and cultural diversity, are equally prized. Although Oberlin's past is tied to both of these values, the relative emphasis on them has fluctuated from time to time. Oberlin's tasks today, at a time of extraordinary national concern for education and for the very fabric of American society, must be clear: to improve the structure of educational excellence that has been built over the past fifty years, and to do so in a context of social and cultural diversity among all members of the College community. It will be precisely the College's ability to bring these values together, to measure each by the other, that will determine its future. Educational excellence is doing well--to the very best of our abilities--the teaching and learning of those subjects, that, by common understanding, are the substance of a liberal arts education.

Cultural diversity, as we use the term, is the building of a community that seeks and welcomes participants in its undertakings from the many groups composing our society and the incorporation in our programs of education addressed to the problems with which a society that values freedom and justice ought to be concerned.

Among Oberlin's tasks, therefore, are to seek internal agreements on the means by which the values of educational excellence and cultural diversity can best be advanced, and to seek students and members of the faculty in ways consistent with those agreements. The specific proposals the Commission will put before the community aim to give practical meaning and significance to these values.

2.5. The goals of the Commission. Against this background, we now turn to the Commission's efforts to review and re-think the nature of Oberlin's educational program. In general, our work has been an attempt to develop an alternative to the present way in which Oberlin seeks to fulfill those goals and facilitate the achievement of those aims. The task of working out such an alternative involves two main questions. First, what are the features and details of a plausible alternative? Second, is an alternative with such features and details desirable for Oberlin at this time?

After some months of study devoted to such questions we now wish to suggest an alternative that we find plausible, and to recommend that alternative as desirable for Oberlin at this time. It is of course the burden of our full set of proposals, as described in Part B of this report, to provide the details of the alternative we wish to recommend. Here we will indicate some specific goals we wish to achieve regarding different aspects of our educational program. We will then introduce the account, to be elaborated in the following chapter, which argues the desirability of the alternative which the specific goals reflect.

(a) Curriculum. The aim of our central proposal in the area of curriculum is to provide a means by which the curriculum of Oberlin's educational program may be systematically and continuously enriched. We seek to make our curriculum open and responsive to ideas for new educational programs from all sources in the community. We have in mind especially programs which are interdisciplinary in character (in one or other of the many senses of that term), and those which may be said to be "non-disciplinary" insofar as they focus on certain problems in their own terms rather than by reference to the academic disciplines. We should add that our point here is not to weaken the curricula associated with departments but, indeed, to strengthen them: first, by enriching the entire curriculum of the College and thus improving the context in which departmental programs appear, and, second, by providing new courses of study some of which may, for different periods of time, be incorporated into departmental programs as contributions of substance and quality.

(b) Structure. Our structural proposals are designed to provide conditions that are more flexible than those we have now for the accommodation of different styles of learning and teaching, to limit the number of students with whom a teacher is working at one time in order to make possible close working relationships between students and teachers for both academic and advising purposes, to provide flexibility for student "leaves" and for times at which new students may begin their academic work, and to accomplish these aims by means consistent with a stabilization of the real costs of an Oberlin education.

(c) Evaluation. We wish to make our practices reflect the different individual and institutional purposes they serve, and thus to distinguish between, e.g., a certification procedure by which the College awards its degrees, procedures by which students may indicate their preparation for advanced study, employment, or other external and future activities, opportunities by which students may receive indications of the relative standing of their work as compared to similar work by others, and, most important for our day-to-day enterprise, opportunities for the close criticism of academic work in progress and for thorough advising and couselling regarding educational plans and life goals.

(d) Environment. The goal of our proposals concerning living arrangements is to provide an environment which itself positively supports the pursuit of educational goals, i.e. an environment which does more than respond to needs for housing and food. We believe that the living environment should and can be an integral part of the learning environment, and, accordingly, that living facilities should no longer be viewed as a peripheral enterprise with a separate budget. We seek ways of developing more integrated and rewarding living communities than we now have, in terms of the ways in which they support the educational program of the College and at the same time contribute to personal growth and the development of the capacities of individuals for tolerance, sensitivity, and respect for others.

Beyond our proposals in the above areas, we shall offer proposals that establish bodies to undertake certain further projects. Inevitably, work of the kind we have been engaged in cannot be "finished" in a period of even several months. The goals we have in mind in our proposals for further studies are these: (i) In the course of its work the Commission has become sufficiently attracted to the ideas of year-round operation of the College and of an expansion in the size of the student body and of the faculty to recommend that we move in the direction of these ideas unless it can be shown not to be feasible to do so. The latter task we have not been able to complete ourselves, and hence it must be given to another body. (ii) We have become convinced that Oberlin's student body is not diverse enough, in respect of the backgrounds of race, age, and economic circumstances of its members, and, further, that in respect of economic backgrounds in particular it is in danger of losing such diversity as it has had. Oberlin should immediately improve its ways of attracting a student body of great diversity and of high educational motivation. We have prepared a position paper on this topic, which provides suggestions we ask another group to develop. (iii) We suggest that a consequence of our recommendations in (a)-(d) above may be changes in the expectations and responsibilities of faculty members, e.g. in the areas of contribution to the curriculum and of educational advising and counselling. These changes may

in turn influence our hiring practices, and our view of the current academic marketplace. An appropriately constituted body should study and review our educational program, with the aims of considering its impact upon the expectations and responsibilities of faculty members, and of making recommendations concerning hiring practices.

It is worth noting here that the aims in (i)-(iii) above may be achieved through a relatively small central planning committee which oversees different groups conducting the relevant research and the translation of recommendations into programs for action.

Finally, we are aware that our recommendations relate in various ways to problems of governance, and are pleased that the Board of Trustees has asked the President "to initiate a comprehensive study of the governance of the College" with the aim of providing a governmental structure "which fosters and supports achievement of the College's educational goals in a framework of shared authority and responsibility."

We conclude this discussion of goals by noting that there is a central theme which supports the goals we mentioned in (a)-(d) above. It is this theme which serves to explain <u>why</u> we have taken those goals to guide our work concerning different aspects of our educational program. This theme requires discussion and elaboration, and these we attempt to provide in the following chapter. Here we will indicate that its general character is that of making our educational programs serve individual needs and interests. In alternative language we seek to found our educational enterprise on individual freedom and responsibility both for students in pursuit of education and for faculty concerned to contribute to a full opportunity for the education of students and to further inquiry, exploration, and development in areas of their own interest.

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3. PERSPECTIVE

3.1. Towards a perspective on change at Oberlin. What is needed, in order to cast the problem of educational change at Oberlin into perspective and to avoid the trap of aimless discussion of surface features of the educational program, is a fundamental question--a question which takes contemporary demands for radical change at face value and at the same time provokes useful questions about the many aspects of our enterprise at Oberlin. A successful fundamental question should also have the capacity to elicit alternatives regarding the nature of education at Oberlin, as it is reflected in the goals, programs, policies, and structures of the institution, so that intelligent decisions about its future character can be made. In what follows we set out a question of the relevant fundamental sort for Oberlin College--not, obviously, for any institution of higher education at any time in its history, but, in particular, for Oberlin College at the present moment.

The question we have in mind is directed to our enterprise as a liberal arts institution. It asks: when the College awards the B.A. degree to an individual, what is, or should be, thereby said or signified? For example, is some achievement thereby recorded? If so, what exactly is that achievement, and how is it known that the relevant criteria of achievement have been satisfied?

Two points should be noted about the fact that our question is directed to our function as a liberal arts institution. First, the question is not thereby irrelevant to the concerns of the Conservatory of Music, so far as we are serious about encouraging cooperation and reciprocal access between our two main educational bodies to the benefit of both. Second, it is plain that what is meant by the award of the B.A. degree is more likely to be a subject of controversy than what is meant by the award of a professional degree in music. It is the very fact that the latter is explicitly a professional degree, while the former is not, that makes its meaning less open to differences of opinion. This is not to say, of course, that there are not likely to be serious differences of opinion regarding how the educational program that leads to the award of the professional degree is to be structured and conducted.

3.2. The Conservatory of Music. For over one hundred years the Oberlin Conservatory of Music has been one of America's most distinguished professional schools of music. The primary goal for the future at the Conservatory of Music should be a confirmation of excellence in the preparation of students for professional careers as performers, composers, conductors, scholars, and educators. In order to provide the best musical education possible the Conservatory has initiated many new programs over the past several years. We believe that this process of self-evaluation of the educational opportunities offered by the Conservatory is the key to its future growth. The introduction of curricular offerings in such new areas as non-Western music, Afro-American music, and electronic music, and such activities as the New Directions concert series are commendable examples of this kind of self-enrichment. Expansion of these programs and the introduction of other new programs dealing with contemporary culture will be a major factor in the Conservatory's capacity for leadership in American musical thought and practice.

In addition to its function as a professional school, the Conservatory should offer curricular flexibility to those students wishing advanced training in music but also desiring a broad spectrum of offerings in the College of Arts and Sciences. We believe that this will attract many outstanding students to Oberlin who in addition to a deep commitment to music are interested in a liberal arts education. This is one of the major advantages that the Oberlin Conservatory has over other conservatories of music in America and one that the Commission believes should be exploited to the fullest.

In view of the expanding interest of liberal arts students in the fine arts the Conservatory should make a determined effort to offer more instruction on various levels in applied music, music history, and music theory for the non-music student. This may well involve the use of students as teachers as well as a general enrichment of the non-professional curriculum. We encourage members of the Conservatory community (faculty and students) to participate actively in cross-divisional programs, as discussed in Part B, Ch. 4 of this report.

3.3. The College of Arts and Sciences. Before considering some main answers to the question of what is said or signified by the award of the B.A. degree, we should note three features about it. In the first place, the question, so far as it interests us in the present context, is not merely a factual one. It is a normative question, to which certain historical and social facts, certain facts about the resources of our institution, and the staying power of certain traditions are relevant. To say that it is a normative question is not to say that it cannot be answered. It is rather to say that it sets before us a matter for decision--a decision about which we shall want to be as careful as our circumstances will allow. The question asks us to decide what we shall

mean by the award of our B.A. degree, and it asks us to decide this not in a vacuum but within the limits of those obligations to individuals and larger communities we may plausibly be said to have, and of those traditions we choose to honor.

In the second place, the question certainly has the capacity to raise further questions about education at Oberlin that are of the first order of importance. These will include questions about the educational program itself, and various components of the curriculum, construed as the contents of the opportunity to gain a liberal arts education at Oberlin. They will concern the structure of the process by which liberal arts education is gained at Oberlin, and hence will include questions about the academic calendar and the length and intensity of the time devoted to the process. They will also concern questions about how and with what modes of evaluation the opportunity to gain a liberal arts education can be successfully negotiated. Further, they will include questions about the size, talents, and working conditions of faculty members and other staff involved, in many different ways, in providing content for that opportunity to gain an education at Oberlin. Finally, they will concern questions about the desirable make-up and size of the student body, the diversity of backgrounds, preparation, motivation, and needs of its members, our admission procedures, our financial aid practices, and the living environment we provide.

In the third place, the question clearly takes the demands for radical change seriously and directly. It does so by setting before us <u>as</u> a matter for decision, and hence for possible reinterpretation, our basic understanding of the central concept of our enterprise. Shall we, as a community, remain on essentially our present course? Or shall we reinterpret the concepts of what it is to gain a liberal arts education in a way that is different in certain respects from our present understanding of it? In the latter case, if those "certain respects" are both important and major, and given that Oberlin is an established college with a reputation for quality and excellence, the burden of argument and justification falls on those who propose change.

3.4. <u>Why entertain change</u>? This last point requires some elaboration. Even if we were to accept the view expressed above concerning an appropriate perspective for thinking about change at Oberlin, there remains the question of why we should take seriously the project of considering change at all. If indeed Oberlin is an established college, with a relatively large endowment, a talented faculty and staff, outstanding students, generally serviceable and attractive facilities, and a deserved reputation, developed over many years, for an educational program of very high quality--a program which includes, in fact, many "innovative" components--the question becomes pressing: why entertain change?

It should be made clear that Oberlin College is not, so far as we can tell, on the brink of an immediate disaster of an identifiable sort. There is no reason that Oberlin must approach the project of change as though it were a possible means of saving its existence, though there may be some schools which find themselves in such a predicament. However, a number of considerations together provide a case for entertaining change seriously, and with due respect to our present educational program and the institutional accomplishment it represents.

Recent financial "freezes" and cut-backs have increased the awareness of members of Oberlin's community that even the wealthiest schools in the country are now required to examine their budgets most carefully. This is an era of soaring costs in the nation generally, and their impact upon institutions of higher education has been serious and in some cases dramatic.

Another factor is that the number of the College's graduates going on to post-graduate study is decreasing rapidly and steadily. (See Appendix, p. 23). This trend is a national one. How long it will continue is unclear. The reasons for it may involve elements of individual discontent with social, political, and cultural dimensions of American life, as well as concrete facts about current shortages of career opportunities in many academic fields requiring high levels of graduate study. This must be of special importance to us, insofar as much of our educational program is presently geared toward preparing students to undertake professional or graduate study of one sort or other.

Equally important sources of concern are certain facts about the pool of young people who apply for admission to Oberlin's undergraduate programs. At the present time the ratio of those who apply to the College of Arts and Sciences to those who finally enroll as freshmen is about four to one. The ratio of those who apply to those who are accepted for admission is even lower. Doubtless some pre-selection occurs within the group of initial applicants, and this may borrow time in which the College can continue to maintain high standards of admission. But even now the pool of applicants from which Oberlin chooses its students appears quite small, in contrast to that of some other colleges with which Oberlin competes, such as schools in the Ivy League and the "Seven Sisters."

Several factors will combine to influence the size of this pool in the future. First, if Oberlin's program continues to require nearly entirely on-campus work, the College's geographical location may become more of a handicap than it now is. Second, if tuition and total costs keep rising at present rates, Oberlin will simply price itself out of the reach of large numbers of qualified applicants (including, among others, the sons and daughters of most faculty members at Oberlin and other colleges and universities). Third, other colleges and universities with which Oberlin competes are, through innovative programs and attempts to increase flexibility,

making a concerted effort to be attractive to greater numbers of possible applicants. In fact, to those schools already mentioned in the Introduction, we may add a whole new set of colleges maintaining educational innovation as a continuing principle of operation. Where Antioch once stood alone, Hampshire, Evergreen, New College, Goddard, Santa Cruz, Old Westbury and others may now be added. Many state universities, whose financial circumstances may sometimes be more advantageous than those of some private schools, are now moving to "humanize" their campuses in an effort to be attractive to students. As a result, the size of the pool from which Oberlin draws students seems threatened. If the pool stays at its present size, the College may not be able to improve the quality and diversity of its student body; indeed, we may be unable to maintain its present high quality.

Now, the factors above are not themselves matters of educational principle, even though they provide a case for considering the desirability of change. They suggest that we should seek ways to "increase productivity" in a sense of those words appropriate to an institution of higher education, that we should attempt to improve the attractiveness of the educational experience at Oberlin in the context of our competition for bright students, and that we should make an effort to keep that experience available to individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds. But they do not suggest what would be "valid" changes in our educational program. That is, they do not themselves tell us what changes would be sound on educational grounds. In the next section we begin a discussion that attempts to provide grounds for change that are educational in kind, rather than financial, competitive, or of some other sort.

3.5. Alternative conceptions. Consider two different conceptions of what may be meant by an institution of higher education when it awards a B.A. degree. For purposes of discussion we may label them, without intending to beg any questions, the Conventional model and the Interests model. It should be plain that the descriptions of these models that follow are of the nature of statements of themes, on which there are many variations and of which there are perhaps no "pure" examples. Oberlin itself, we suggest, lies somewhere between the two models we have in mind. The important point is that Oberlin's recent experience is that of movement toward the second. These are not the only possible models relevant to this subject, but we have found them useful in the context of a discussion of educational opportunity at Oberlin.

According to the Conventional model, when an institution awards a B.A. degree to a person, a number of relatively specific things are thereby said, by way of providing evidence that the individual has reached certain goals. Among these specific things is, for example, that the individual has, at a minimum, been exposed in a systematic way to a number of areas of study, each of which has its own history of development and a claim to be of general importance. Also, the individual is

said to have reached a reasonable degree of competence in some single area of study, such that he possesses an ability to deal with problems within it in a methodologically appropriate fashion. Beyond these specific components, it is usually the case that the individual is said to have achieved some competence in a language and perhaps a literature other than those of his native tongue. And it is important to note that this process of exposure and development of competence has taken place in a context involving practices of evaluation intended to be as objective as study in the different areas will allow.

Again, exposure and development of competence of these sorts, usually encapsulated in the institution's distribution, major, and language requirements, are, according to the Conventional model, related as evidence to the claim that the individual has reached certain goals. The model need not be interpreted as claiming that satisfaction of institutional requirements guarantees that an individual has, for example, successfully developed a capacity to grasp inter-relationships among matters of human concern, or a capacity to see things whole rather than in bits, or a capacity to understand in a rich and sensitive way the complexities of the world and the people in it. Nevertheless, while there may be, logically, a hiatus between satisfaction of institutional requirements and achievement of the goals associated with liberal arts education, the Conventional model is committed, in effect, to the view that satisfaction of those requirements is a way of reaching such goals, and, furthermore, a way which has the merit of being objective enough to allow an institution of higher education to regard the award of the B.A. degree as a matter of public recognition of achievement. In general, what an institution operating in accordance with the Conventional model means by the award of its degree is that an individual has satisfied a set of requirements, set by the institution in accordance with its understanding of a tradition, which satisfaction is regarded by the institution as evidence, though not as conclusive evidence, that certain capacities for knowledge, understanding, and sensitivity have been at best developed and at least encouraged. (This meaning attached to the award of the degree is an institutional one; what meanings are in fact attached to it by others--e.g. professional schools, employers, graduate schools, members of the "establishment," those who have no opportunity to earn the degree--is not under discussion here.)

Alternatively, according to the Interests model, when an institution awards the B.A. degree to a person, it would not similarly mean that he has met a set of institutional requirements providing evidence of his having reached certain goals. Rather, the central notion in this model is that the award of the degree means that the individual has pursued certain of his interests, employing the institution's faculty, staff, and facilities as a network of opportunities and resources, in such a way and with such results as to provide evidence of having reached the goals associated with liberal arts education. Notice that the contrast between the two models is not on the level of goals.

The important contrast concerns how those goals are to be reached. The difference between the models is not on that account an unimportant one. For the ideology associated with the Interests model has implicit in it the claim that the diversity of needs, backgrounds, and preparation of individuals is taken more seriously and dealt with more directly on the Interests model than the Conventional model. And for that reason the Interests model claims to offer a better route, from the standpoint of individuals, to the achievement of goals associated with liberal arts education.

How would the Interests model operate in practice? It will be the burden of our specific proposals to recommend the details of how it might operate at Oberlin. Certain general features of the model should be discussed here, however, in order to provide orientation and prevent misunderstanding.

In the first place the Interests model does not require an institution which operates in accordance with it to respond, in the context of gaining a liberal arts education, to any interest an individual may wish to pursue. The point of the model is to provide an alternative way of developing the capacities for knowledge, understanding, and appreciation associated with possession of a liberal arts education, and the way it proposes is one which starts with the individual and his interests rather than the institution and its requirements. But even if it commands a wide range of resources, a single liberal arts institution cannot be everything to everyone. The interest an individual wishes to pursue must be of a kind that the institution can respond to, and, further, it must be of a kind that there is some reason to think, as determined by a student in close consultation with faculty members, it should respond to. The identifying of interests, and the discerning of opportunities and resources by which they can be pursued, are difficult tasks requiring judgment and intelligence. But such tasks are very much a part of the intellectual exploration that, in the end, is the best means of developing the capacities associated with liberal arts education.

Second, the model is in no sense a rejection of standards, discipline, or rigor in intellectual activity. Indeed, the aim of the model is to allow the impetus to serious work to be a person's own interests, rather than an institution's requirements. And its promissory note is that greater motivation toward genuine intellectual involvement will be thereby secured.

Third, the Interests model is compatible, in principle, with what may generally be called "preprofessional training." That is, the model provides no obstacle to interested students seeking to include in their liberal arts education the academic work required for admission to professional and graduate schools. It does not require--as some suggest is done by programs exemplifying the Conventional model--that students

have preprofessional programs as a main part of their education at a liberal arts institution. And it does not require this for the reason that liberal arts education is not itself necessarily connected with qualification for professional training. Clearly, a person's quest to develop the capacities for knowledge, understanding, and appreciation associated with liberal arts education is independent of his attempt to satisfy the conditions of entering specialized professional or graduate training. It may be that a program by which a person attempts to satisfy the latter conditions may be a legitimate part of the former quest, but it cannot be said that this must always be the case.

Fourth, it should be emphasized that the Interests model in no way violates what has been called the "liberal arts tradition" in higher education. It poses, again, an alternative route to achievement of the goals traditionally associated with liberal arts education. What is distinctive and attractive about that route is that it proposes to take an individual deep enough into his own interests to reach a point at which he can see that a genuine understanding of what he is interested in requires exposure to and competence in related areas of study, and it, in effect, gives him a "major" in what interests him, whether what interests him locates in a traditional area of study, somewhere between such areas, or in an area which somehow involves and integrates traditional areas. The Interests model, in contrast to the Conventional model, is more difficult and challenging for the institution which operates according to it, insofar as it requires the institution to respond to the interests of individuals in such a way as to provide resources and programs that lead from those interests to the goals associated with the liberal arts tradition. Nevertheless, while it may be difficult for the institution, it presents to the individual an opportunity for education that promises the most genuine kind of self-motivation--that of pursuing the development of distinctively human capacities from a point of departure in one's own interests.

3.6. The Interests model and the faculty. Thus far it may appear to some that the Interests model carries a risk of encouraging what some have called "consumerism" in liberal arts education--a tendency which may not be in the best interest of students and which might place objectionable expectations and responsibilities on the faculty. We are aware of these concerns. In an institution that chooses to adopt the Interests model it will be important to create a climate of expectations that will lead students to recognize and strive for the values of a liberal arts education.

In this section, however, our concern is with the implications of the Interests model for the faculty. It is true that this model emphasizes the student's pursuit of education from a point of departure in his interests, needs, and preparation and that it does so in such a way as to give him both freedom and responsibility in planning and carrying out his educational program. But it should not on that account prove threatening to faculty members. The reason is that the authority of

the faculty in their choice and treatment of subject matters is, from the student's viewpoint, a "given". By our system of governance the faculty decides what interests the College, as a liberal arts institution, should respond to. It is within this range of opportunities that the student is free to choose and to exercise his responsibility for his education.

Clearly, in a healthy and progressive institution, there will be need for mutual accommodation of student and faculty interests. A faculty will wish to respond, insofar as the interests and competences of its members permit, to interests it believes to be legitimate, and will encourage and welcome willingness on the part of individual faculty members to respond. The central purpose of the tenure system and the security it assures is to guarantee academic freedom, not to lock faculty members into an unchanging set of offerings. The interests of faculty members are not static, and although firm commitments to particular fields of scholarly and creative work should be respected, so should the freedom of faculty members to pursue new interests and to move from one field into a neighboring one be recognized. In short, we believe that the Interests model is not only compatible with the idea that a College should be a center of learning in which full respect and support are accorded to the freedom of faculty members to work in the fields of inquiry and creative activity of interest to them but also with the idea that a College, as a center of learning in a time of rapid change, should encourage new ventures of exploration by those who wish to undertake them.

Of course, situations will arise in which students find that their educational needs cannot be wholly satisfied at Oberlin. We mentioned above that the Interests model does not require an institution to provide out of its own resources the means to respond to any and every student interest. We add here that in the event of a "mismatch" of resources and interests, the Interests model does not necessarily suggest a change on the side of resources. An institution which follows the Interests model will seek to be prepared to respond to a wide variety of individual needs and interests, but it will do so in light of its commitments as a center of learning to support subject matters that it believes to be of genuine and lasting human importance and to sponsor new and creative work in little-explored--or, for that matter, much-explored--fields of potential significance to intellectual and artistic life. The kind of tension that may occur between the Interests model and these commitments is not, of course, new in the history of higher education. Our contention is that the Interests model does not displace these commitments, and could not do so in institutions devoted, among other things, to making possible a way of life appropriate to intellectual and artistic endeavor.

Our final and perhaps most important point in this section is that as much as we have attempted to let the Interests model guide our efforts in the area of the education of students, we have made a parallel

attempt to provide opportunities for faculty members to pursue and develop their own work. We have attempted, that is, to view the Interests model as applying in positive ways to members of both the student body and the faculty. Regarding the faculty, this will be expressed most directly in our proposals concerning the curriculum and what we call "structure," in which areas we provide for ways in which new programs can enter the curriculum as interest in offering them occurs, for flexibility in teaching and learning formats, for a smaller effective student-faculty ratio, for less fragmented teaching loads, and for greater amounts of time for research.

3.7. Towards the Interests model. The discussion above contains the elements of an argument for a liberal arts institution to operate according to the Interests model, if certain conditions can be satisfied. A large part, but not the whole, of satisfying these conditions consists in the institution's choosing to make certain commitments.

(a) A main element in the argument for the Interests model is the fact that the institution in question serves a highly diverse student body. The less alike, in terms of their social background and educational preparation, the members of an institution's student body, the greater weight we may give to the view that the ways of gaining a liberal arts education must be plural, and, indeed, individualistic in character, tailored as far as possible to the interests, needs, and preparation of those involved.

Oberlin's tradition suggests that it is committed to having a diverse student body. The paradox of its current situation is that, as we mentioned in 2.5. above, that diversity is being lost, for reasons that have to do with how students finance their education. Our view is that: if Oberlin wishes to maintain and reinforce its commitment to a diverse student body, and if it can find ways to move from the narrowing make-up of its present student body toward greater diversity, it has good reason to move toward operation in accordance with the Interests model. For its own part the Commission strongly supports the commitment to diversity.

(b) But the Interests model requires that the student body must be not only diverse but highly motivated. Indeed, this positive factor of motivation is a condition of the success of an institution's operating according to the Interests model. That is, such an institution will almost certainly fail if it cannot have students either already highly self-motivated, or capable of being brought to that condition through participation in the institution's program itself.

Our view, then, is that the Interests model requires highly motivated students; and, of equal importance, highly motivated students deserve an institution which attempts to operate in terms of the Interests model. If Oberlin moves in the direction of the Interests model, we recommend, as reported earlier, that a study be undertaken concerning

how far our admission procedures reach out toward highly motivated students, including those with creative and artistic potential, regardless of their backgrounds, and how those procedures could be improved. We believe a number of our proposals themselves speak to the question of how the institution's program might contribute to student motivation.

(c) As a counterpart to these factors of diversity and motivation in the student body, there are further commitments and conditions which concern the faculty of an institution contemplating the Interests model. It is apparent that the model requires certain things of faculty members which are not similarly required, though they may be considered desirable, by the Conventional model. Among these is a willingness to be involved in close--and time-consuming--advising and counselling with students regarding their educational programs, and how they may best structure them so as to pursue their interests in the course of attempting to develop the human characteristics associated with liberal arts education. A condition of being effective in the role of advising and counselling is a faculty member's knowledge of the resources of the institution and the talents and special abilities of his colleagues. It appears to us that the Interests model requires of the faculty member a much more extensive knowledge of such resources than does the Conventional model. Further, faculty members must be prepared to be inventive and flexible in their teaching, regarding both its content and how it is offered, so as to function as guides for those seeking opportunities to pursue their interests.

The Commission's view is that Oberlin has a faculty capable of the flexibility and imagination suggested by the Interests model. We realize that an institution's decision to move toward the Interests model requires commitments on the part of individual faculty members to review the nature of their teaching, to take such steps as are necessary to become knowledgeable about the resources of the institution and their colleagues, and, perhaps above all, to become personally aware of the importance and responsibilities that go with the role of advising and counselling in an undergraduate liberal arts institution.

3.8. Final remarks. It is evident that our decision to move toward what we have called the Interests model is a complicated one. In the discussion above we have attempted to describe some of the conditions of success and corresponding commitments on the part of the institution that are involved. Commitments, of course, will carry us only part of the way. If we commit ourselves to offering the opportunity to gain a liberal arts education to a diverse body of highly motived students, independently, as far as possible, of their race, sex, age, or economic backgrounds, then we must do what is necessary to find such students and to make our program responsive to their different interests and needs. If a decision in favor of the Interests model leads us to change our conception of the responsibilities of a faculty member in certain respects, we must take steps to review and rethink our present teaching practices and the policies by which we recruit faculty. And so forth. Commitments without the appropriate follow-through are empty gestures. But in any event, commitments are the first step, and it is there that we now find ourselves. If we make

our commitments with suitable reflection and resolve, they can lead us to turn to our work with energy and even a sense of adventure.

In our discussion in these chapters we have attempted to put the problem of change at Oberlin into perspective, and to sketch in a general way an alternative to our present system of education. The proposals that follow provide the details of this alternative. Our conclusion here, however, should be a note upon the word "alternative." It seems to us that, in fact, what we have here described as an alternative is the outcome of a process of change in Oberlin's educational program that is already well underway. Rather than posing an alternative that is new to the Oberlin campus, we are, in effect, attempting to contribute to the development of an existing trend--a trend which is reflected in the creation of the Winter Term, greater opportunities for ad hoc courses and special programs on and off the campus, changes in our grading practices, and the establishment of the individual interdisciplinary major. In any case perhaps our discussion here will help make clear what is attractive about the process of change we have been experiencing. The greater opportunities for intellectual exploration and creativity related to the interests of individuals which that process represents makes it something to encourage.

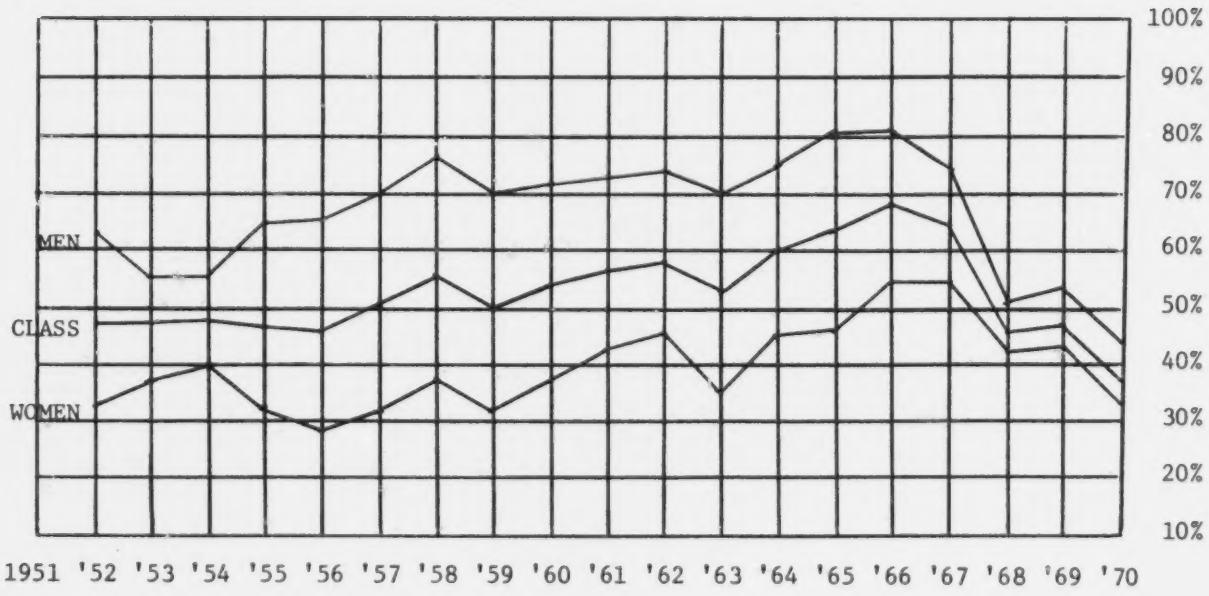
PART A

Appendix

"FIRST-YEAR OUT" FIGURES:

per cent of Oberlin graduates going on to graduate schools

(College of Arts and Sciences)



The Education Commission

Preliminary Report

PART B

PROPOSALS

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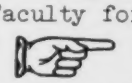
September 1971

PREFACE

In this Part B of its Preliminary Report the Education Commission offers a series of brief discussions of the several proposals we intend to place before the Oberlin College community. These discussions focus on the central ideas in our proposals. In our Final Report those central ideas will be formulated in the language of motions to be submitted to the General Faculty for debate and action. The purpose of these brief discussions is not simply to identify those central ideas, but also to provide a context for them, in the form of explanation and support.

Each of the following discussions has been approved by the Commission after lengthy consideration and revision. A great many members of the College community have contributed to our work, and thus to the ideas expressed in this document. But our purpose in issuing this report is also to gain the benefit of still further discussion with members of the community concerning these ideas. In the next few weeks we will seek every opportunity for such discussion. Thereafter the Commission will meet to prepare its Final Report in light of the community's response.

To help the reader identify proposals which will be put into legislative language and submitted to the General Faculty for debate and action, we have employed the following device: 

It appears in the margin opposite those matters on which the Commission will make legislative recommendations.

4. CURRICULUM

Introduction

4.1. The concept underlying our educational proposals is what we have called the Interests model. We have sought means by which the content of the opportunity to gain a liberal arts education at Oberlin can be open to new ventures and thereby enriched and made responsive to changing needs and interests of students and faculty members. We have also sought means by which the forms the opportunity takes can accommodate different styles of learning and teaching.

It is not enough for the educational program to be technically open to new ventures. We wish to encourage changes in content and form in ways that will subject new ideas to careful scrutiny and hard questioning before they are introduced.

In this essay we discuss, first, the content of the educational program, and, second, the forms, or modes, of learning and teaching.

Content

4.2. The present organization of the curriculum. Oberlin's educational program now consists largely of the course offerings of faculty members affiliated with departments representing the major academic disciplines. This traditional organization has provided an educationally and administratively serviceable structure, well designed for many recognized intellectual pursuits, and should be retained.

Like any structure, however, it imposes certain restrictions, and in our view these increasingly limit Oberlin's ability to respond to needs that do not fit easily within existing departmental lines. In growing numbers students and faculty wish to bring together skills and information from a number of established disciplines, and to bring disciplinary resources to bear on new subjects in ways transcending a more or less mechanical combination or juxtaposition of disciplines. Oberlin has been moving in this direction; one of our aims has been to make it easier than it now is to pursue interests that do not fall plainly within the ken of a single department.

4.3. Towards a new organization. The curricular challenge is to find a way of organizing our intellectual pursuits that is educationally sound, administratively feasible, and responsive to changing interests. The Commission will therefore propose that the curriculum be interwoven with offerings associated with programs--either cross-disciplinary or non-disciplinary in character--as well as offerings associated with departments.

We have found it helpful to think in terms of the following model. Let vertical lines represent departmental offerings. Thus, the offerings of the history department form one vertical line, those of the philosophy department another, those of the mathematics department another, those of the music theory department another, and so on. This vertical organization should be retained but supplemented with horizontal lines representing the participation of faculty members in cross-disciplinary or non-disciplinary programs. Most of the faculty time put into horizontal-line programs will be provided by teachers who have departmental affiliations. Offerings in these programs will connect departments in new ways through studies of problems or themes involving contributions from several disciplines.

The introduction of horizontal programs is seen as strengthening and enriching departmental curricula: first, by demonstrating the interrelatedness of the disciplines that enter into a liberal arts education and thereby improving the academic context in which departments offer their work, and, second, by encouraging new courses of study which by incorporation into departmental curricula will add substance, currency, and quality to departmental offerings.

4.4. A Council on Educational Programs. The Commission will recommend the establishment of a Council on Educational Programs with responsibility for programs (not departments). The Council is to stimulate, receive, and evaluate requests for new programs. It will make final decisions on the initiation and termination of programs. Some programs may exist for a long term; others will be introduced for short periods. The Council's membership is to include faculty members and students (selected by procedures to be set forth in detail in our final legislative proposals) and the academic deans.

The staff of each program will be made up of faculty members who volunteer because of their assistance in planning a program or their interest in it. The Council on Educational Programs will consult with departments from which such staff members must be drawn if a successful program is to be developed. Departments will be expected to respond positively, and may be asked to contribute up to 25 percent of their teaching time for participation in various programs in accordance with mutually agreeable arrangements.

Each program will have a director, comparable to a departmental chairman, and a committee of faculty members and students to assist in planning and administration.

The establishment of the Council on Educational Programs may lead to jurisdictional questions involving it and existing policy committees. Procedures for dealing with certain of those questions will be set forth in our legislative proposals.

In Appendix A to this essay brief examples of five programs are offered to illustrate and clarify our recommendation. They are:

(1) Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities

(2) The Inter-Arts Program

(3) The Human Development Program

(4) The Ecology and Political Economy of the Lake Erie Basin

(5) A special freshman program

4.5. Comment. Oberlin's curriculum already includes, of course, certain horizontal-line programs. Their status and their relationships to departmental curricula are, however, unclear and that lack of clarity has affected their development unfavorably. Afro-American Studies, Chinese-East Asian Studies, the present Humanities Program, and Hebrew Studies (as proposed) are examples of current programs.

Modes of Learning and Teaching

4.6. The lecture course. The basic building block of an Oberlin education is now the lecture course. This mode of learning and teaching is an agreeable one for many persons, but it is not well suited to the needs and tastes of others. For this reason other modes have been increasingly introduced: senior and freshman seminars, discussion groups, labs, private reading, field trips, off-campus projects, various kinds of more or less independent study, such as the honors program, the senior-scholar program, Winter Term, the experimental college, and so forth.

4.7. Towards a variety of approaches to learning and teaching. We have tried to devise an educational program that will accommodate a variety of styles of learning and teaching, including the lecture course where it is the preferred mode. Although it will not be possible to satisfy everyone, we believe that we can better accommodate:

> those who wish to concentrate on one or two things at a time, as well as those who prefer to pursue a number of studies at once;

those who want to work intensively (and perhaps to complete their work at Oberlin in three years), as well as those who prefer to spread their education over four or even five years;

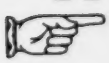
those who wish to delay their college work for a year or two after high school or to interrupt their college careers with a year or more for travel, or employment, or reflection, as well as those who prefer to proceed towards a degree at a steady, uninterrupted pace;

those who will benefit from independent work, as well as those who need or prefer a highly structured and formal pattern of academic involvement.

4.8. Towards reduction of the effective student-faculty ratio. The overall student-faculty ratio is about 12 or 13 to 1--an average that is at once correct and misleading. Small classes are strongly desired and all too seldom experienced. More opportunities for one-to-one and small-group relationships with teachers are desired by both students and teachers. At the same time, however, there is also a desire on the part of many students for more opportunities for independent study with little week-to-week supervision by faculty members.

As explained in the essay on evaluation (Ch. 6), we want to provide an environment in which teachers will have time for careful criticism and discussion of student work. A necessary condition is a low effective student-faculty ratio, that is, a sharp limitation on the number of students with whom a teacher is working closely at one time. The aim is to limit courses to about 25 students, to limit seminars and other small-group work to half that number or less, and to limit the number of students engaged in projects requiring close supervision by faculty members to an average of not more than three or four per session. We recognize that for a transitional period it may be necessary to authorize some exceptions.

Given our goal of stabilizing the real cost of an Oberlin education (see Ch. 5), a reduction of the effective student-faculty ratio can be achieved only if some of the credits required for graduation can be obtained through work in which a high student-faculty ratio is acceptable or by independent work of kinds requiring little or no faculty time.



4.9. Graduation requirement. We will recommend that the B.A. degree be awarded upon the accumulation of 108 units of credit (where one unit of credit is the equivalent of normal full-time work for one week, or about 40 hours),* of which not less than 72 units must be earned while in residence at Oberlin or engaged in an off-campus project conducted by a faculty member.**

*This applies to the College of Arts and Sciences. For a discussion of graduation requirements concerning a range of degrees in the Conservatory, see our essay on evaluation.

**Exceptions will, of course, be made for students transferring to Oberlin. In no case, however, will the degree be awarded for less than 24 units earned during residence in Oberlin.

Comment. The program awards 108 units of credit for 120 weeks of normal full-time work because only six units of credit are awarded for normal full-time work during one seven-week session. Except for transfer students, a student will be in residence for at least twelve seven-week sessions. Credit could be given for the work of the seventh week (see 4.11 below) under a special heading, such as advising and counselling, but it seems preferable to limit the transcript to credits for subject matters of a familiar kind.

4.10. Types and amounts of work for credit. In order to provide a variety of approaches to learning and to make possible a low effective student-faculty ratio in at least half of a student's program, we will recommend that certain new types of work be recognized for credit. These involve a high student-faculty ratio (or entirely independent work) as the counterpart to a low ratio in the rest of a student's program. The types of work for credit, our estimate of the average composition of student programs, and the limits, if any, placed on the amount of work of each type are discussed in Appendix B of this essay.

4.11. Intensity of work. As explained in the following essay (Ch. 5), an academic year consisting of four sessions, each seven weeks long, will be proposed. Six credits will be earned for normal full-time work during one session, the seventh week being reserved primarily for advising, counselling, and critical discussion of student work.

We will recommend that a student may carry as heavy or light a load as he wishes, except that additional tuition will be charged for work in excess of 6.0 units of credit per session that involves close faculty supervision. (See Appendix B for further discussion.)

We will recommend that a reduction of tuition be authorized for enrollment in work of less than five credits per session in cases in which such a schedule is recommended by the student's academic adviser for academic reasons or by the Dean of Students for reasons of health, handicap, or economic hardship.

4.12. Credits per course. We will recommend that the number of credits per course be limited to not more than four per session, except by special authorization of the appropriate academic dean.

Comment. Courses may be offered for any appropriate number of units of credit, with the understanding that the appropriate number is arrived at by dividing the number of hours of work expected per session by 40. Thus, a course to which a student is expected to devote ten hours per week

for six weeks should be worth 1.5 units of credit (60/40 = 1.5). Courses may be offered over a period of two sessions (12 weeks). Thus, a course to which a student is expected to devote ten hours per week for two sessions should be worth 3.0 units of credit (120/40 = 3).

4.13. Accommodation of Conservatory students. In order to enable Conservatory students to elect work in the College of Arts and Sciences while devoting at least half of their time to their studies in the Conservatory, we will recommend that each department and program in Arts and Sciences undertake to make such arrangements as may be necessary to offer work desired by Conservatory students in ways involving not more than 3 credits per session.

4.14. Departmental and program work loads in Arts and Sciences. We will recommend that the average teaching load per staff member be not more than 125 instructional units (IU's) per session in more or less conventional lecture courses, small group study, and closely supervised sponsored study, and, in addition, not more than 30 IU's per session in sponsored independent study.* The distribution of departmental and program work loads among staff members will be left to departments and programs.

*As explained in Appendix B, independent sponsored study entitles a student to not more than one hour of faculty time per unit of credit.

Comment. A teacher might offer a 4-credit course to 25 students (100 IU's) and direct four students engaged in full-time, closely supervised sponsored study (24 IU's), for a total of 124 IU's. He might also give six hours of his time per session to each of five students engaged in full-time sponsored independent study (30 IU's).

If even as much as one-third of the faculty's total teaching time is devoted to the other types of teaching described in Appendix B (one-third is probably an overestimate of the time required), the remaining two-thirds of the faculty's teaching time should be more than adequate to limit teaching loads as indicated above. It is probable, however, that for a transitional period it will be necessary to authorize some exceptions.

(4. CURRICULUM)

Appendix A

Examples of Programs

In this Appendix to our essay on curriculum we briefly describe a group of programs which are of a kind that our proposed Council on Educational Programs could deal with. The programs that we merely summarize here have been prepared by different members of the College community, in cooperation with members of the Commission. We emphasize that the brief descriptions that follow are meant to provide examples of programs, and that our list of examples is by no means exhaustive of the possibilities. The program in (1) below is a revision and enlargement of an existing program in our curriculum; the others would be new to our curriculum. Of its studies of these programs the Commission has spent the most time with (2), the Inter-Arts Program, and intends to recommend to the Council on Educational Programs that it give priority to the consideration of that program.

(1) Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities. A program for interdisciplinary studies in the humanities, as developed by a group of interested faculty members, would deal with humanistic themes and problems. It would generally involve comparative materials, and emphasize the history of ideas. It is important to note that the program is not conceived as limited to members of the Humanities division of the College of Arts and Sciences. It would involve faculty participants from the Conservatory of Music and all divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences. Most of the offerings in the program would be open to students regardless of their class standing.

In a given two- or three-year period the program might offer a set of courses which covers a wide range of humanistic concepts and problems, and which includes a number of "open" course listings reserved to accommodate specially prepared materials resulting from the research or other studies of faculty members. The program would also have associated with it groups of offerings which form programs of concentration concerning interdisciplinary subjects, such as, for example, medieval studies or linguistics. Among the topics which might receive treatment in the program in one form or other are these: Comparative Mediterranean Civilizations; Darwin, Freud, and Marx; the Theory

and Practice of War; Literature and Persecution; Satire in Literature, Painting, and Film; Peasant Societies; Acculturation; Psychoanalytic Interpretation; Science and Letters; The Uses of Mythology; Music and Literature; Archaic Centers of Civilization; Linguistics and Humanities; Renaissance Humanism.

(2) The Inter-Arts Program. A large number of teachers and students cooperated to prepare and submit to the Commission a proposal for an Inter-Arts Program. Again, if our curricular proposals are approved, the Commission intends to recommend to the Council on Educational Programs that it give early consideration to the Inter-Arts Program. In the following paragraphs we summarize material presented to the Commission.

Creative activity emphasizes doing and making; it is not limited to cognition. The creative act is often a synthesis of emotive, physical, and cognitive processes. The education of feeling is complementary to the education of thought, and fosters a more creative attitude in other learning situations. Although such activity is valid for its own sake, the release of instinctive energies during the creative process, and their productive use by the individual, demands the active involvement of the whole personality. Creative activity may work toward the individual's own growth and produce results rich in communication, participation, and social awareness for both creator and public.

Oberlin has valued creative activity as approached through scholarly pursuits in the areas of history, criticism, and appreciation. We have not, however, greatly encouraged creative acitivity in the arts as a valuable educational experience for everyone. The College's commitment to creative work in music uniquely equips Oberlin to foster an atmosphere conducive to creativity in all the arts.

It is suggested that existing educational programs be expanded to provide new opportunities for those students whose primary interests lie in creative work in the arts and to recognize such work as a legitimate endeavor in the College. It will be important that a wide range of creative activities of recognized educational merit be open to all members of the college community, without regard to native endowment or levels of achievement.

The proposal, as it now stands, calls for submission to the appropriate policy committees of the following recommendations:

An Inter-Arts Program for the College as a whole--Conservatory and College of Arts and Sciences

An Arts and Crafts Center

An Arts Council, to oversee the Arts and Crafts Center, as well as activities in the arts generally

A continuing Artist-in-Residence position

A revision of faculty support programs, to encourage creative work during leaves, released time, and so forth.

The Inter-Arts Program should offer students time and resources to experiment with various art forms and to satisfy their own artistic impulses. Liberal arts students and Conservatory students, whatever their technical abilities in the arts may be, should be encouraged to work in formal and informal settings. There should be expanded opportunities for experimental studies and productions in avant-garde dance, drama, music, mixed media, and so forth. A major in the Inter-Arts Program should be established.

A continuing Artist-in-Residence position should be established in conjunction with the Inter-Arts Program. Oberlin artists should be eligible for appointments to the position, and it should be filled by two or three artists (composers, dancers, painters, sculptors, film-makers, actors, writers), each for assignments of two or three months.

(3) The Program in Human Development. The program, as submitted by a group of interested persons to the Commission, is to focus on the study of humanistic concepts important in understanding human experience. In the following paragraphs we summarize material presented to the Commission.

The learner and his life span will be the subject matter of the program. The program should aim at helping persons to:

appreciate and tolerate individual differences in others;

know themselves better, as a way of knowing others;

explore many ways of clarifying, expressing, and acting on one's feelings, values, and concerns for others;

grow in flexibility, responsiveness, and discrimination, and in using individual and collective resources for the achievement of goals.

The development of a student's personality is inseparable from his learning experiences at Oberlin. In Human Teaching for Human Learning George Brown says:

> Whenever one learns intellectually, there is an inseparable accompanying emotional dimension. The relationship between intellect and affect is indestructibly symbiotic. And instead of trying to deny this, it is time we made good use of the relationship. Indeed, the purest, highest form of abstract thinking is coupled with congruent feelings on the part of the thinker, even in the grossest sense of pleasure, boredom, or pain. Or, as Michael Polanyi has observed, it is the passion of the scholar that makes for truly great scholarship.

Understanding of both the world and the self have long been the twin goals of a liberal education. Because it is the more accessible, higher education tends to concentrate on the world, hoping that somehow the self will develop on its own. The Human Development program would develop the study of the self in order to support and reinforce the traditionally intellectual curriculum of Oberlin by bringing knowledge and order into the educationally valuable realms of emotion, attitudes, values, and fantasy.

The interdisciplinary staff of the program would stress two educational objectives: first, learning about the self in light of the concepts of personality theory, cultural systems, and group dynamics; second, learning about the world from perspectives most useful to the individual (for example, relating personal experiences to social theory in a seminar). Participation in the program should be open to all members of the academic community, but it should be especially recommended for freshmen.

There will be a variety of formats: weekly seminars, short and long field experiences, lectures, workshops, and discussion. The content of each learning unit would grow out of the mutual interests of faculty and students, but a seminar and workshop program would most likely treat, at varying lengths, the following subjects: Environmental Awareness and Survival; Human Sexuality; States of Consciousness; Creative Thinking and Behavior; Empathy Training; Minority Group Relations; Parents; Autobiography and Life History; The Meaning of Womanhood; Body Movement and Awareness; Community Action.

Persons working in the affective domain should have the opportunity for continuing and careful preparation, training, and evaluation. The program should offer two kinds of workshops: one for all interested faculty and administrators; the other for the staff and interns of the program itself. The "open" workshop should be planned to create an awareness of the teaching-learning process. It would be offered during the late summer for several days with occasional weekend workshops during the school year.

(4) Studies in the Ecology and Political Economy of the Lake Erie Basin. Unlike the three preceding examples, which might be continuing programs (depending on the results of periodic reviews), the Lake Erie Basin studies might be planned for a three-year life. Alternatively, they might be regarded as the first project under a general programmatic heading, such as Ecology and Environment; they might then be replaced after a time by another area or topical project.

The Lake Erie Basin Studies would focus, as now conceived, on the natural and human history of the Basin, the current state of the basin's natural and social resources, and on the political, economic, and social consequences of the use of those resources. The Studies would make use of the full complement of modes of learning and teaching: single, public lectures by faculty members and invited experts; lecture courses, reading courses, seminars, workshops, and field work; independent work. A faculty seminar for faculty members who are interested in the project but are not members of the program staff might go on throughout the life of the program.

The Basin Studies, given the current interests of faculty members, might be conducted by members of most science and social science departments as well as several humanities departments. A partial list of topics is: Geological History of the Basin; the Economics and Land-Use Geology of the Great Lakes; Systems Analysis of Regions; Water Resources of Northern Ohio; Concentrations of Inorganic Nutrients in the Cuyahoga River; Resources of the Lake Erie Basin; Applications of Cost-Benefit Analysis to Regional Problems; Politics of Resource Allocation; Problems of International Cooperation: The Development of Oil Reserves beneath Lake Erie.

(5) A Special Freshman Program. The Commission has received and discussed various suggestions for a special freshman program, and in the end decided to refer the problem to the Committee on Educational Programs.

We believe that the opening weeks of college should provide first-year students with a challenging intellectual experience of a kind few of them will have encountered in high school. We also believe that these weeks should be used to expose students to unfamiliar fields and thereby, perhaps, to discover unsuspected interests.

One suggestion is a lecture-seminar program during the first six weeks. Members of the faculty and invited speakers might lecture on one or more themes chosen for their general interest. Daily seminars, each including fifteen to twenty students, might be conducted by faculty members. The faculty member directing a seminar group should be the faculty adviser or tutor of the students in the group. Other faculty members, from each of the major divisions, would be invited to participate for a time in each seminar,

in order to bring the perspective of their disciplines to bear on the theme of the program and in order to introduce freshmen to teachers from a number of departments and programs.

Other suggestions for a special freshman program have also been made.

In view of our other proposals we believe that special attention needs to be given to the problems of the first-year student. In particular, the abolition of distribution requirements, if approved, would make it important to find other means of acquainting first-year students with the opportunities open to them and to assist them in planning programs that will be consistent with the goals of a liberal arts education.

(4. CURRICULUM)

Appendix B

Types and Amount of Work for Credit

As indicated in the second part of this essay, Modes of Learning and Teaching, the Commission is recommending that certain new types of work be recognized for credit. We indicated that these new types of work would involve a high student-faculty ratio or entirely independent work, in order that a low ratio could be achieved in the rest of a student's program. In Table 1 we provide our present estimate of the average composition of the programs of those students who wish to minimize the cost of their education by taking full advantage of the opportunities for independent study.

For students who need to take four or five years in residence and to carry a light load for academic reasons or reasons of health, handicap, or economic hardship, an appropriate reduction of tuition charges would be made, so that they would not be put at a disadvantage in comparison with students who complete their work in three years.

Those students who for other reasons wish to spread their education over four or more years (because they prefer a light load or because they wish to obtain more than 72 units of credit in work involving substantial amounts of faculty time) would be required to pay additional tuition.

In the paragraphs following the table, we describe the new types of work which, according to our recommendations, would be recognized for credit.

One final preliminary comment: in the absence of experience it is not possible, of course, to know what programs students will in fact design for themselves. If experience shows that our estimates are wide of the mark, it will be necessary to review the educational program and to revise it in certain respects, such as, for example, in regard to the need for staff to carry it out.

Table 1

Credits toward Graduation
(Three year B.A. Program)

Type of Work	Units of Credit Earned		Limit
(1) Involving low S-F ratio:			
Small group study	12		
Lecture courses	15		
Closely supervised spons. study	12		
Special freshman program (see below)	3		
Sub-total		42	At least 36
(2) Involving high S-F ratio:			
Programmed study	12		Up to 18
Audit plus	6		Up to 8
Independent spons. study	24		Up to 30
Sub-total		42	
(3) Involving no faculty time:			
Self-sponsored study	12		Up to 18
Non-Oberlin work for credit, incl. advanced placement	12		Up to 24*
Sub-total		24	
(4) Total		108	

*In the case of transfer students the maximum would be 84, thus requiring of them at least 24 units of credit in work at Oberlin for graduation.

(a) Small group study. The term refers to seminars and similar undertakings. The limit, subject to exceptions on the authorization of the academic dean, should be twelve students.

(b) Lecture courses. The term refers to more or less traditional lecture courses. The limit, subject to exceptions on the authorization of the academic dean, should be twenty-five students.

(c) Closely supervised sponsored study. Some "independent" research projects, some private reading, and certain other kinds of work involving one-to-one or small-group student-faculty relations are now "closely supervised" and require substantial amounts of faculty time. In a good many cases the burden such supervision

imposes on faculty members has not been adequately recognized. We believe that closely supervised sponsored study has a valuable role in our educational program, and recommend that it be recognized as a normal component of teaching duties.

Comment. A "full" teaching load for one session might consist of a small group study program or a lecture course plus the direction of three or four students in closely supervised study plus the advising of five or six students engaged in independent sponsored study and the evaluation of their work.

(d) Special freshman program. An allowance is included in the table for a special freshman program, but, as we have indicated earlier, the question of initiating such a program and of its nature is to be referred to the Council on Educational Programs.

(e) Programmed study. A large fraction of a student's time is now spent in introductory courses, and the same is true, of course, for teachers. We recommend that, where feasible, a new approach to introductory work should be offered, one we are calling "programmed study." Experience at other schools suggests that an approach making use of new materials and techniques (programmed texts, films, audio-visual materials, etc., supplemented by work shops) can be effective and can make possible a reallocation of teaching time from introductory to intermediate and higher-level work. Indeed, it may be suitable in some cases for intermediate work. The course in numerical analysis which has been developed under the direction of Professor George Andrews is an example of what can be done along these lines.

We will recommend that the College seek financial support of the preparation or acquisition of needed materials.

Comment. In time programmed study may provide a means of reaching persons who have missed college and now find it beyond their reach. Such persons might be able to earn credits while on the job and to use vacations or short leaves of absence to complete a liberal arts program.

(f) Audit plus. A student who now desires to explore an unfamiliar field must almost always begin with an introductory course to which he will be expected to devote one-fourth to one-third of his time for one or two semesters. This is a heavy commitment and to some extent discourages exploration. A strong case can be made for new opportunities for exploration and thereby for the discovery of unsuspected interests. We call this new kind of opportunity "Audit plus."

An Audit-plus course is conceived as a series of carefully prepared formal lectures designed for a large audience. A course might be offered by one or more teachers. A student electing an Audit-plus course will be expected to do a small amount of reading to supplement the lectures (hence the "plus"). There will be no evaluation of a student's work; he will be expected to attend regularly and one credit will be awarded for a one-session course on the student's indication, on the honor system, that he has done the work of the course.

In the usual case a teacher will presumably wish to follow up or accompany an Audit-plus course with a more or less conventional course for those students who wish to go deeply into a subject. It is our hope that all departments and programs will offer one or more Audit-plus courses.

(g) Independent sponsored study. The major distinction between closely supervised sponsored study and what we are calling "independent sponsored study" lies in the amount of faculty time required in the planning, supervision, and evaluation of projects sponsored by faculty members. In many cases "independent sponsored study" projects will probably take place off-campus and outside the regular academic year, and the sponsoring faculty member may be able to meet his responsibilities in connection with such projects in the periods between the regular academic sessions. We believe that our present educational program neither gives most students the experience of planning and carrying out independent projects (of the sort for which a liberal arts education is claimed to provide a preparation) nor the experience of working on an individual project under close supervision. Our proposals for sponsored study are therefore designed to provide additional opportunities for both kinds of experience as normal parts of a college program.

We will therefore recommend the inclusion of independent sponsored study as a recognized component of work leading to the B.A. degree.

We will also recommend that election of independent sponsored study will entitle a student to not more than one hour of faculty time per unit of credit.

(h) Self-sponsored study. A part of the present graduation requirement is participation in three Winter Terms. Although some Winter Term programs are now closely supervised or conducted by faculty members, the original purpose was to encourage

students to undertake genuinely independent work -- independent, that is, of faculty supervision; not necessarily without supervision by others. We believe that there should be room for, and, within limits, credit for, genuinely independent work and that credit should be awarded upon the filing of an appropriate description of projects and a self-evaluation of the work done.

(i) Non-Oberlin work for credit. Many students now enter with credits for advanced placement, and the average amount of such credit has been increasing. Many other students earn credits in summer school, or in work in other institutions during a semester or year away from Oberlin. We now recognize such work for credit towards graduation, and this practice should be continued.

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5. STRUCTURE

5.1. Introduction. From the outset the Commission has recognized that proposals for change must satisfy two criteria: they must be justified on educational grounds in terms of Oberlin's purposes and they must be economically feasible.

The Commission believes that its proposals stand on their own educational feet and is prepared to support them because of their academic merits. At the same time, however, they have been developed with certain economic considerations in mind. A major goal--fundamentally related to Oberlin's traditional purposes--is to reduce, if possible, the real cost of an Oberlin education in order to bring an Oberlin education within the financial reach of an increasing proportion of qualified persons from economically and culturally diverse groups.

The real cost of a college education has been steadily and rapidly rising for many years. Oberlin's tuition was $1,150 in 1960/61. Over the decade of the 60's the consumer price index rose by one-third, but tuition at Oberlin more than doubled, rising to $2,400 in 1970/71. On the basis of present programs a continuing rapid increase in tuition will be necessary. It is already difficult and will become increasingly difficult for middle-income families to afford the costs of an Oberlin education. We have already seen a tendency to restrict access to Oberlin to the well-to-do, on the one hand, and, on the other, to students who qualify for substantial governmental assistance because of low family incomes.

Given the emerging serious imbalance between the number of persons seeking teaching posts and the number of openings, there can be little doubt that the 70's will see heavy downward pressure on real incomes in the teaching profession. Improvement of real incomes is unlikely unless it can be justified in terms of increased productivity. Many schools, including some of the most distinguished, are considering or initiating three-year degree programs, year-round operation, and a variety of new educational programs in their attempts to increase productivity, slow down the rate at which tuition is projected to rise, and make their programs more attractive as a means of improving their competitive positions. To some extent, of course, changes in programs are being made in an effort to respond to changing needs, interests, and aspirations of today's students.

For these reasons we believe that Oberlin will face increasingly severe competition. The College enjoys a fortunate financial position, but this should encourage us to take advantage of our good fortune to improve our educational program by means consistent with the stabilization and, if possible, the reduction of the real costs of education. The choices realistically open to Oberlin are

to take the initiative in such ways or to react tardily and imitatively to the initiatives taken by others.

In the most general terms our proposals represent an effort to reconcile the goals of quality and economy by combining close working relationships between students and teachers in part of a student's program with substantially independent work in other parts. Money aside, our most limited resource is time: the time of students and the time of faculty members. Genuine improvement in the quality of education will come primarily from better use of our time for the purposes of an education in the liberal arts. We believe that the changes we are proposing in the educational program are consistent with both a better use of our time and a reduction in the real cost of education. It is now for others to consider whether the proposals we are making offer a promising approach to the goals we all hold in common.

5.2. Calendar. We will recommend a division of the academic year into four terms instead of two semesters. Each term will run for seven weeks, with the seventh week reserved primarily for advising, counselling, and criticism and discussion of student work. Each term will be followed by a break: one week between the first and second and between the third and fourth terms; two weeks between the second and third terms. From start in early September to finish towards the end of April, therefore, the academic year, including breaks, will total 32 weeks.

There are three major reasons for the proposed division of the academic year:

First, it will be easier for students and teachers to work intensively on one or two things at a time than it would be with a two-semester calendar.

Second, as explained in the essay on evaluation, the Commission is placing increased emphasis on advising, counselling, criticism and discussion of student work, and on the student's responsibility for planning his own educational program. We believe that student work should be and will be evaluated and criticized throughout the year but that it is desirable to set aside a week four times a year for the purposes indicated above.

Third, the Commission believes that it will be desirable, if feasible, to shift to year-round operation within the next few years. We may find it advantageous to do this in steps, by adding a fifth and then a sixth term.

5.3. Size of student body; size of faculty; financial implications. We are not recommending a change in the size of the Conservatory of Music. The following recommendations refer, therefore, to the College of Arts and Sciences.

As we have indicated, our proposals involve a reduction in what we have called the effective student-faculty ratio in one part of a student's program and a higher ratio in the remainder. An overall student-faculty ratio of about 17 to 1 is needed to stabilize the dollar cost of an Oberlin education, to permit some improvement in real incomes, and to achieve the student-faculty ratio we have proposed for small-group study, lecture courses, closely supervised sponsored projects, and a special freshman program. Given the present size of the faculty, it follows that the student body of the College of Arts and Sciences should increase by about one-third.

It is clear that these changes cannot be carried out all at once and that it will be necessary to view them as goals to be accomplished over a transition period of, say, five years. What we wish to recommend to the General Faculty is, then, that the General Faculty make a commitment in principle to increases in the size of the student body and in the overall student-faculty ratio which, when taken together with our other proposals concerning the educational program, would make it possible to stabilize the dollar cost of an Oberlin education, and to improve the real incomes of the faculty, administrative staff, and other employees of the College.

In the event that the General Faculty makes this commitment, our recommendations concerning the specific goals which appropriate committees and administrative agencies of the College should plan to reach step-by-step, as feasible, over the period 1972-77, in acting upon that commitment are these:

(a) A basic tuition of about $10,000 for twelve terms (three academic years).

> Comment: This tuition charge would cover the cost of the degree for a student who seeks to minimize the cost of his education by earning at least 72 units of credit in residence and up to 36 units in other approved ways.

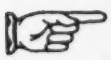
(b) Year-round operation, in the form of an academic calendar consisting of six seven-week sessions. (Any individual student or faculty member would be expected to be enrolled or engaged in teaching some four of those sessions.)

(c) An overall student-faculty ratio of about 17 to 1, in the form of a student body of some 3000 and a faculty of some 180, the increase in the student body to be subject to the availability of sufficient housing without the construction of new dormitories.

In a later essay (Ch. 8) we will recommend that the General Faculty commit itself to year-round operation and expansion as described above unless it proves upon careful study not to be feasible.

6. EVALUATION

6.1. The College of Arts and Sciences: institutional requirements. We wish to recommend changes in our requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts that will put final responsibility for determining and pursuing educational goals on the individual student. A system of requirements by subject matter or College division is clearly inconsistent with the Interests model developed earlier; we cannot charge students to assume mature and full responsibility for planning their individual education and at the same time maintain a set of College-wide requirements. We believe that more education will be accomplished if the individual student, and not the institution itself, is obliged to make the major and final educational decisions.



Accordingly, we recommend that the present institutional requirements related to subject-matter, languages, and physical education be abolished. We further recommend that the departmental major be made an option, and not a requirement, for the award of the B.A. degree.

Our proposal to abolish these requirements does not grow out of any lack of commitment to the goals which they were instituted to serve. Indeed, our goals as stated earlier, although phrased somewhat differently, are those which Oberlin College has always maintained. We believe that today those goals are more likely to be achieved by requiring students seriously to plan and implement their own educational programs rather than by requiring them to take an arbitrary number of courses in certain areas. In effect, we wish to accelerate a process that is already occurring whereby students rely on themselves and on the advice of teachers and friends, rather than on the College catalog, as they plan their education.

(a) Encouraging breadth. At present an average student takes approximately ten required courses (two each in Social Science, Natural Science, and Languages; four in Humanities) out of a total of about 32 in a four-year program.* Our proposals in the essay on structure should mean that an average student will still be exposed to a number of different subject matters before graduation, although the modes of teaching and learning employed may have more variety than at present. We also propose a number of other changes which should serve to encourage students to broaden their education. For example, we suggest the adoption of a special program for freshmen designed to introduce them to new subjects. The maintenance of large lecture courses under an "Audit Plus" format will allow students to sample a

*Twelve required courses out of 34 if the required work in physical education is counted as two courses.

variety of areas. The removal of the requirement to have a departmental major and our proposal below that students in the College of Arts and Sciences be allowed to select the method of grading to be used in each of their courses may also encourage breadth. Our proposal that we set aside four one-week periods per year during which teachers and students in their classes are expected to meet for evaluation and counselling should produce more frequent and better counselling. In addition, we recommend that each student be expected to choose as soon as possible a faculty adviser with whom he will consult periodically in developing his educational program. We believe that if these proposals are accepted, the academic program of an average student will be at least as broad as it is at present.

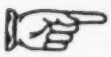
(b) The role of the departmental major. We believe that by making the departmental major an option, not a requirement, we can better serve individual departments, and both the pre-professional and the general student. We assume that departments would continue to maintain their own requirements for a major. Advanced courses, which are often directed mainly toward the pre-professional student, will probably become smaller and be composed mainly of such students. The absence of students who had in the past taken the course primarily because it was required for a major in that field should raise the level of the course with benefit to the department and to the pre-professional student. The general student would benefit from being able to take courses to pursue an interest in them rather than to satisfy a requirement. If the proposals in our chapter on curriculum are accepted, the College will have a much richer set of programs than at present, and we hope that many students would decide to concentrate their work in a program. In any case, the College will expect each student to plan and develop a coherent educational program. The faculty adviser's principal effort would be in helping students define and implement their long-range educational goals.

6.2. The Conservatory of Music. The Bachelor of Music degree is a professional degree in the way in which a degree in law or medicine is a professional degree. In the same way that individual College departments must retain certain requirements for their major program, the Conservatory will retain specific requirements for the Bachelor of Music. Within the context of a graduation requirement of 120 units of credit,* the B.M. degree requirements will include twelve

*The graduation requirement for the B.M. degree is twelve units of credit greater than that for the B.A. degree due to the continuation of work in applied music during the seventh week of each of the four sessions making up the academic calendar we propose in our essay on structure.

units of music theory, six of music history, completion of basic music skills and a curriculum in a major department, departmental hearings, performances, and a senior recital.

The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music will be available to students who wish to devote a large part of their activities to music, but who also wish maximum flexibility in curricular choice. These students will be admitted on the basis of an audition, like candidates for the Bachelor of Music, but no major requirements will be specified for the B.F.A. except that students in a performance area must successfully complete departmental freshmen and sophomore hearings. The graduation requirement for the B.F.A. in Music will be 108 units of credit.



The Performance Diploma will be awarded, upon completion of 28 units of credit in applied studies in music and fulfillment of the performance requirements, to musicians who have acquired an extensive musical background through institutional or private studies or through unusual performance experiences. An examination consisting of one or more public recitals will also be required for the Performance Diploma.

6.3. Evaluation of student work. Oberlin's procedures for evaluating student work have changed over a period of a few years from the use of letter grades exclusively, to the present policy according to which students in the College of Arts and Sciences choose the mode of grading that they prefer for all of the courses taken in a particular semester, and those in the Conservatory take courses graded honors-pass-fail. The Commission recognizes that the subject of grades has occupied a considerable amount of time in recent faculty meetings, and that about half of the students in the College opted for letter grades, and half for credit-no entry, in 1970-71.

The subject is complicated because systems of evaluation have had to serve several ends simultaneously. We wish to try to separate these purposes in the following discussion, and to suggest how each of them can be reached in a way appropriate to the Interests model. This will lead us to propose minor modifications in our present evaluation practices.

(a) Criticism. Undoubtedly the most basic and essential function that evaluation can serve in a college is that of furthering the student's progress in his educational program. We label as "criticism" the day-to-day and week-to-week evaluation of student work in progress that is at the heart of the teaching-learning process. On the one hand we feel that this aspect of evaluation has received too little emphasis; on the other we realize that it is not possible to bring about an improvement by formal legislation. Instead we have developed proposals that seek to provide more opportunities in which criticism may take place. We have proposed procedures by which we can lower the effective student-faculty ratio, and our proposed calendar contains four one-week periods per year during which students and their teachers and tutors are expected to meet to evaluate past work and to plan the student's

educational program. Furthermore, if the interests model and its implications are accepted, students will be studying subjects that they themselves have chosen and in which they are more likely to wish to receive criticism. But there is no escaping the fact that a significant improvement in what we refer to as criticism can only come about if individual faculty members and individual students wish it to.

(b) Certification. Another function of evaluation is to state when the educational program of a student is to be certified with the award of the institution's degree. In American colleges and universities this is usually accomplished by the registration of progress in individual courses over a four-year period. In some other institutions it is done by means of comprehensive examinations at appropriate times. Our recommendation above was that the Bachelor of Arts degree in the College be awarded upon "successful completion" of 108 units of credit. We now propose that when a course has been successfully completed in the view of the teacher, the name of that course be entered on the official record of the student. In effect, we propose that certification for the degree be registered on a credit-no entry basis.

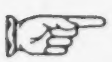
Relative standing. Evaluation procedures usually involve some method of ranking of students within individual courses or within their college class. Prospective employers and graduate schools may benefit most from this component of evaluation, but from time to time individual students may reasonably ask to know their relative standing within a class or discipline. We believe that Oberlin should continue to leave this matter to the individual student and teacher. We recommend that students in the College of Arts and Sciences be allowed to request letter grades in any of their courses. We also recommend that individual instructors in the College of Arts and Sciences continue to be allowed to require that specific courses be given only on a credit-no entry basis, but that in such courses instructors prepare upon request a written evaluation of a student's work. Such evaluations may become part of the student's official record.

(d) Preparation. Although it overlaps somewhat with the category of relative standing, it may be useful to consider separately the evaluation of a student's preparation for work or further study. Until recently letter grades and the grade-point average of an Oberlin graduate were used for this purpose, and for the determination of relative standing, but with the adoption of credit-no entry and pass-fail grading, grades and grade-point averages have become less significant for both purposes. Scores on standardized tests such as the Graduate Record Examination and the Law Board tests, and letters of recommendation by faculty members, may continue to be the most important evidence of preparation. Our only recommendation in this area is that students should be encouraged to maintain their own

record of their preparation in the form of written evaluations, papers, tape recordings of musical performances, etc. A list of the contents of the student's portfolio could be shown on his transcript.

Academic Standing. Students at American colleges and universities have traditionally entered at age 18 and, if successful, proceeded without interruption to graduation four years later. But we know that in fact the age of readiness for college varies from person to person. It would appear to be desirable to allow some students to come without a high school diploma, and to permit other admitted students to defer the beginning of their work at Oberlin. In addition, we should make it easy for students to take a temporary leave of absence while remaining on our official records as students.

It has also been traditional in our institutions of higher learning to require students who were not making satisfactory progress toward the completion of degree requirements to withdraw temporarily or permanently. Oberlin's Committee on Academic Standing has devoted many hours to the making of decisions in this area. It is our belief that if the Interests model and our proposals for evaluation and counselling are adopted, procedures for determining academic standing can be simplified.



We recommend that (a) certain high-school students be encouraged to begin their college work before they graduate from high school, or, in some cases, without completion of their high school programs; (b) other admitted students be officially enrolled but allowed and in some cases encouraged to defer the start of their Oberlin education for periods of a year or more; and (c) students be allowed and in some cases encouraged to withdraw temporarily with formal re-enrollment assured and facilitated. We also propose that responsibility for determining academic standing be assumed by an appropriate dean, and that students required to withdraw have the right to carry an appeal to a Student Committee on Academic Standing for final decision.

If our other proposals are accepted, Oberlin students will be enrolled in smaller classes, and with the grading option that they themselves have elected. We predict fewer academic failures. When a course is failed, no entry will be made on the student's record and in principle at least the length of time required for graduation will be increased. In addition, students will not be allowed to enroll in more advanced courses for which the failed course serves as prerequisite. If we are able to improve our counselling of students, and if they can easily withdraw voluntarily, most students in serious and continued academic difficulty will, we believe, follow the advice of their counsellors and leave Oberlin on their own.

Thus we believe that the number of students who would elect to remain at Oberlin although failing academically will be so small as to be negligible. Nevertheless, an institution must have some method for protecting itself against those who do not use its resources wisely. Therefore, we recommend that instructors notify, in writing, the Associate Dean of those students in their courses whose work is well below standard. The Dean would have the authority to require a student whose work is consistently deficient to leave the College. His decision could be appealed to a Student Academic Standing Committee.

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7. ENVIRONMENT

7.1. Introduction. The Commission has given much attention to ways in which residential and related arrangements might improve the educational program of the College. We acknowledge at the outset that there is no necessary connection between a person's gaining a liberal arts education and his presence on a residential campus, but we also believe that the residential campus can and ought to offer some unique opportunities not found in other settings.

To begin, we need a set of guides for our thinking about the development of a supporting environment for education. First, the Interests model itself suggests that we approach that challenge in terms of the interests of students and faculty members. Second, we are concerned with an individual's relations to others, and in particular with the development of the capacity of appreciation which, broadly conceived, is directed to more than intellectual and artistic objects per se. By "appreciation" we have in mind certain notions associated with the tradition of liberal arts education, so far as that kind of education has been thought to have a "civilizing" power. It is simplistic to attach a single word, such as "civility", to the complex features we wish to mark here. Our view is that liberal arts education both contributes to and flourishes in an environment in which persons are prepared to behave toward each other with tolerance and sensitivity, based upon self-understanding and a fundamental respect for the personalities of individuals and for the autonomy of individual human minds. It is our hope, then, to establish a context for living and learning that will support an approach to education based on interests and that will contribute to the development of capacities for self-understanding, tolerance, sensitivity, and respect for others.

Further, given Oberlin's circumstances, a successful environment should be pluralistic, if it is to fit the needs, interests, and backgrounds of a diverse community, and finally, it should maintain a balance between individual and collective rights.

Most of the following discussion focuses on the living environment. Implicit in our proposals, however, is the need for different and better use of classroom space. Consideration will have to be given to refurnishing some classrooms (to make them less formal), to providing facilities suitable for the use of audio-visual and other equipment, and to assigning exclusive use of space to a course or group of courses where such an arrangement would be advantageous and feasible.

7.2. Recommendations. To achieve our aims we will propose the following:

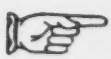
(a) That residential and classroom arrangements designed to enhance the educational environment be developed in response to requests from reasonable numbers of students and/or faculty members.

(b) That costs related to achieving these aims be viewed as legitimate educational costs and have a claim to consideration on this basis when budgetary decisions are made.

(c) That new residential programs reflecting interests of students and faculty members be presented for action to the Council on Educational Programs, and to the Student Life Committee and the Residence and Dining Halls Committee when a particular kind of residential facility is required.

(d) That faculty involvement in residential communities be recognized as an important part of the educational program and taken into account when a teacher is being evaluated and when committee and other non-teaching assignments are being made.

(e) That house groups be responsible for the management of their houses and carry responsibility for day-to-day maintenance, with a student manager overseeing the work of students.



(f) That the Dean of Students assume responsibility for expanding and coordinating a varied program of recreation. We believe that the leadership of a professionally trained person is needed.*

*We note that existing budgets of the Physical Education Department and the Student Union include items for recreational use of their facilities; however, at present there is no coordinated plan of recreation for the total college community. Therefore, we recommend that the Dean of Students be given the responsibility for developing such a plan, both to supplement existing programs, and to balance the intensive intellectual environment and living situation that now exists. A desirable way of implementing the plan would be through the attention and leadership of a professionally trained person who understands the contribution that recreation can make to personal growth in an academic context.

7.3. Living groups. When we speak of an environment which positively supports education, we mean something more than the provision of accommodations and dining facilities which passively serve material needs. Problems of personal interaction in a social context in which styles of life, values, and commitments are perceived as changing and in which cultural guidelines have lost much of their force, should be dealt with, and residential communities are natural places in which to deal with at least some of them.

We need living groups capable of nurturing close personal relationships. Although Oberlin is not a large school, its atmosphere may at times seem quite impersonal to some students. The formation of small living groups of students and faculty members who are concerned about one another and willing to learn from one another is one way in which people may learn how to cope with problems of personal interaction.

The following discussion of the features of desirable living groups is based upon these assumptions:

(a) That a residential group may contribute to intellectual and personal growth through the sharing of experience and should be regarded as an integral part of the total educational environment of the College.

(b) That living patterns influence student attitudes toward education.*

> *We note that present living arrangements tend to isolate students and faculty in their respective quarters and therefore fail to make their potential contribution to the educational process. They may even reinforce the competition associated with the traditional stratification of academic roles.

(c) That the involvement of faculty members in residence halls will foster more interaction between students and teachers and encourage both groups to consider the process of education as a joint venture.

(d) That the development of viable residential groups can best be accomplished when common activities or an academic focus are built into the structure of the group.

At this point it may be helpful to list certain features of a successful living group: (i) the group would come to realize that the values of autonomy and community are not necessarily in conflict and that a healthy balancing of these values is attainable; (ii) interactions within the group would provide release from pressures, relaxation, and conversation and at the same time encourage respect for the need for privacy for study and thought; (iii) the members would be similar enough in attitudes and background to achieve easy communication but different enough to be interesting and challenging to one another's ideas and values; (iv) students would be brought in touch with others, including members of the faculty and staff and local citizens, some of whom might also be residents in the group's quarters; (v) the sense of belonging to a group would be fostered by a variety of social, recreational, and educational activities; (vi) the residential arrangements would be designed to encourage spontaneous creative activities; (vii) the group would take steps to strengthen the idea that with freedom goes responsibility and to build an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and considerateness; (viii) the group would view itself as having responsibilities for participation in institutional governance; (ix) the members would be responsible for group activities, as well as the day-to-day maintenance of their residence.

Residential units and their programs should, in short, provide centers offering various opportunities to meet the personal, social, and educational needs of students. These opportunities might include formal, cognitive programs, personal-growth programs, and recreational and social activities. A variety of opportunities should contribute to the vitality of the group and to individual self-discovery and maturation.

To make progress toward these goals a staff is needed to play an active role early in the life of a group and a facilitating role as the group gains cohesiveness and the capability to manage its affairs. By helping to make the things that naturally go on in a house -- learning from one another, sharing, relaxing, socializing -- more enjoyable and stimulating, a staff can help to make our dormitories important educational assets.

7.4. Programs. In this section we describe certain programs that might be conducted in residences. New programs with an educational component would be submitted, in accordance with our recommendations in Ch. 4, to the Council on Educational Programs for approval. Programs requiring the allocation of space would also be sent to the Student Life Committee and the Residence and Dining Halls Committee for action.

(a) Educational programs. (i) Freshman seminars. Freshmen choosing the same seminar could be assigned to the same house, so that the seminar could be taught in the house. This would help to create a learning situation with significant after-effects because members would have a common interest in the subject. (ii) House seminars, workshops, short courses, and lecture-discussions. By meeting in a residence, the chances of useful after-effects are enhanced. In some cases short courses for credit might be offered in a house, but the importance of credit should not be overstressed. A lively and successful group will generate many useful educational activities, centering around such interests as poetry, photography, issues of social importance (justice, racism, the environment, drugs, etc.), religious questions, art, music, crafts, and so forth.

(b) Social action programs. A successful living group will be concerned not only with its own affairs but also with those of the larger society. Possible programs include: (i) lecture-discussion sessions on such topics as: the need for open spaces; environmental problems; election issues; strategies for social change; improvement of town-gown relations through tutoring, programs at Green Acres, "rest homes," and so forth; (ii) follow-up community projects.

(c) Recreational programs. (i) Intramural sports; (ii) house recreation: volleyball, swimming and skating parties; picnics; cook-outs.

(d) Social programs. (i) house parties; (ii) social events for residents and guests, such as coffee hours, dinner parties, post-game or post-concert gatherings.

7.5. Governance responsibilities. Matters of concern to an entire group will of course arise, such as the violation of individual rights or simply thoughtless behavior. The group would ordinarily be expected to deal with such problems itself, and in the process to become more sensitive to the rights and interests of others and to the problems of accommodating different styles of behavior.

We recommend that living groups be given responsibility for day-to-day maintenance of their houses, with a student manager to oversee student work. Successful handling of these responsibilities should help to foster a sense of community and pride in the attractiveness of the group's residence.

7.6. Staff requirements. In addition to the present staff positions (which include a Resident Director, a Senior Resident, Floor Counsellors, and a House Manager), we will recommend: (i) a Faculty Fellows program. Three or four Faculty Fellows would have a relationship with a living group growing out of courses, seminars, workshops, etc., on the model of Afro-American House, Asia House, and the language dorms. Another three or four Fellows would be serving as advisers to members of the group. A chairman chosen from among the Fellows associated with a group might coordinate their efforts and work with the Resident Director. Some of the Fellows might be in residence where such arrangements were feasible. Fellows would be appointed jointly by the Dean of the Conservatory, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of Students. (ii) We also will recommend a Community Fellows program, to provide for an association of local citizens with student living groups and to bring students into close touch with community affairs.

In developing the Fellows program we can learn a good deal from the models of Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, and Harvard. Fellows associated with a living group should have special dining arrangements, social occasions, and prestige inducements, and in these and other ways come to identify themselves with a particular house.

7.7. Types of houses. We anticipate that three different types of houses will emerge:

(i) Houses without a specific focus. A number of living groups will probably develop which do not have a single guiding theme or set of interests in light of which to plan programs. Dascomb and Barrows probably fall into this category, but we believe that their programs should be expanded in light of the aims we have outlined.

(ii) Asian Studies House. Living accommodations could be provided for three faculty families through alteration of existing facilities to create an Asian Studies House. Such a house could bring together interested faculty families, interested students, and the Director of

Asia House in a joint attempt to overcome the separation of "living" and "learning" characteristic of the present situation. Offices could be provided as part of this living-learning arrangement, and seminars and other course work might be centered in the house.

(iii) "Interest" Houses. We recommend that arrangements be made to accommodate certain "Interest Houses" in our residential system. We have in mind living groups which wish to develop their activities around a basic theme, or problem, or interest of a cross-disciplinary or non-disciplinary nature. Group activities might center on the creative arts, environmental problems, social or political issues, education, etc. The members of a group would have a variety of perspectives and their common interest would help to support their efforts to integrate learning with living. Faculty members would be encouraged to associate themselves with a house whose interests were close to their own; in some cases they might live in the house; they might have offices there, hold classes in rooms converted for the purpose, and have coffee or lunch in the house on a regular basis. We do not propose that Interest Houses have separate curricula, but we do believe that it would often be desirable to bring course work and living arrangements together in this way, and to enable faculty members to become involved in Interest Houses in accordance with their circumstances and their scholarly and artistic activities.

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8. FURTHER PROJECTS

8.1. Introduction. Inevitably, work of the kind the Commission has engaged in cannot be brought to a tidy conclusion in a period of even several months. The proposals we have described in the discussions above themselves generate new problems, and the general perspective they reflect suggests tasks of review and implementation in different areas. In this discussion we set out three main projects that should be conducted over the next few months. And we suggest how the conduct of those projects should be organized: namely, through the operations of a small central body overseeing groups of persons with special competences in the areas of the different projects.

We add that we are not simply creating new committees to "study" vaguely formulated "problems." We are recommending that certain projects be carried out, not that certain problems be studied. That is, we are asking that commitments to certain goals be made, and that the relevant tasks of research and implementation be given to appropriate bodies.

8.2. Three projects. The projects we have in mind concern (a) year-round operation of the College and an increase in the size of the student body and of the faculty, (b) diversity and motivation of the student body, and (c) recruitment and conditions of employment of members of the faculty.

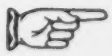
(a) In the course of our work we have become sufficiently attracted to the ideas of year-round operation of the College and of an expansion in the size of the student body and of the faculty to recommend that we move in the direction of these ideas unless it can be shown not to be feasible to do so. Our goals in this connection should be an increase in the student body of the College of Arts and Sciences of about fifty per cent (two-thirds of the total of whom would be on the campus at any one time), an increase in the size of the faculty to bring about a student-faculty ratio of about 17/1, and an academic year of six seven-week sessions.

There are social, educational, and financial grounds for our recommendation here. As a social point, year-round operation would allow us to make the opportunity for education at Oberlin available to greater numbers of students. Socially and educationally, it would allow us greater flexibility for curricular planning, for programs which attempt

to reach out to individuals whose lives do not regularly permit them to spend periods of several consecutive months in residence on a college campus, for accommodating entering students who wish to begin college work at times other than the fall, and for accommodating faculty members whose professional work may occupy them at locations away from the campus at different periods of the year. Financially, the year-round use of the physical plant coupled with an increase in the size of the student body would result in a significant increase in the monies we can direct to the educational program. Finally, an increase in the size of the faculty will bring with it the opportunity to provide our campus with a still greater variety of talent and resources for the educational program.

(b) In Part A (2.5.) of this report we noted that the Oberlin student body is not diverse enough as regards the backgrounds of its members. There are two main dimensions of this problem. Economically we see that such diversity as our student body has had is being lost, for reasons that concern the resources which individuals can bring to the task of financing their education. Socially and culturally we see that Oberlin must continue and widen the efforts it has underway in the areas of recruitment of students from minority-group backgrounds and of institutional preparation directed to making the opportunity for education at Oberlin for such students genuine rather than merely formal.

Regarding the latter dimension of the problem of diversity, we urge that the good work of the Special Educational Opportunities Program Committee continue, and that it focus especially on programs of recruitment and institutional preparation designed to bring to the campus students from a greater number of minority backgrounds.



Regarding the economic dimension of the problem, we recommend that a group composed of faculty members, students, and relevant officers from the administration be given the task of seeking ways of implementing a wide variety of means for bringing students to Oberlin irrespective of their financial resources and age. In an Appendix to this discussion we offer a position paper which is the result of our studies concerning diversity of the student body and its impact on student motivation for education. That paper may serve as a guide for the work of the group we recommend be established.

(c) We believe that a consequence of our recommendations will be changes in the expectations and responsibilities of faculty members, e.g., in the areas of contribution to the curriculum and of educational advising and counselling. In different parts of this report we have emphasized our view that Oberlin must further develop its capacity to respond to cultural diversity, in which view we include the College's seeking even more vigorously than in the recent past to attract qualified members of minority backgrounds to its faculty. Such factors--changes in the educational program and a commitment to diversity, together with our traditional function as a center of

scholarship and art--suggest that a study of Oberlin's capacity to attract a strong faculty should be conducted. Such a study would have the aim of reviewing and making recommendations concerning our hiring practices and, in general, the conditions of employment for faculty members. The project should take into account changes in graduate education and recent economic trends and projections. It should deal specifically with such questions as the adequacy of our support for research, creative work, and rethinking of curricular offerings; ways of meeting our commitment to diversity in the membership of the faculty; student involvement in faculty hiring; ways of assessing faculty performance in the areas of teaching and advising; and what different kinds of contributions to the life of the community should be recognized as relevant to salary and advancement considerations.

8.3. A central committee. It will be the purpose of our legislative proposals to outline the details of how these projects may be carried out. Here we will merely express our view that a convenient mode of organization for them would be a small "central committee" which conducts the projects through groups of faculty, students, and administrative officers with special competence in the area of the projects.

Thus, the project on year-round operation should involve certain business and financial officers of the College; the project on diversity and motivation of the student body should include representatives from the Office of Financial Aid, the Office of Admissions, and the Office of the Dean of Students; and the project on recruitment and conditions of employment of faculty should involve the academic deans, several department chairmen from the various divisions of the College and Conservatory, the chairman of the Council on Educational Programs, and, as consultants, the elected faculty councils.

Our reason for suggesting that the group of projects should be overseen by a central committee is that the projects themselves are related in various ways, such that communication between persons working on different projects should be facilitated. We view these projects as a continuation of the work of the Commission, and our experience has suggested that a central coordinating body for such activities is desirable.

APPENDIX

Towards an Equal Opportunity Program

(1) Introduction. Oberlin College was the first institution of higher education in the United States to admit women, and one of the very first to admit blacks. By the year 1860 only "28 persons of acknowledged Negro descent" had graduated with baccalaureate degrees from American colleges and universities.* The College archives show

*Leslie H. Fishel, Jr. and Benjamin Quarles (eds.), The Negro American: A Documentary History (New York: William Morrow, 1968).

ten black male recipients of the B.A. and six female recipients of the "literary degree" by 1860. Between 1865 and 1895 approximately 200 more blacks received degrees from "white" colleges, and 75 of them were graduates of Oberlin.*

*Fred E. Crossland, Minority Access to College (A Ford Foundation Report) (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

The record suggests that Oberlin occupied a leading position among American institutions of higher learning in early struggles to end segregation by sex or race. It cannot be claimed that those struggles have been successfully completed in American life. Even on the Oberlin campus our black enrollment falls short of the percentage of blacks in the population of the nation. But in what follows we wish to discuss another form of discrimination--not a new form, but one that is becoming increasingly evident in the private sector of American higher education.

We refer to discrimination in terms of the economic resources of individuals. Like many other selective private colleges our undergraduate student body is made up primarily of persons from upper-middle-class backgrounds. As an illustration the table below shows the average family income of freshmen financial-aid recipients for three recent years.*

*The information is from a report on financial aid prepared by James W. White, Director of Oberlin's Office of Financial Aid.

Average Family Income

Freshmen Financial-Aid Recipients

College Class	College	Conservatory
1967	$ 9,553	$ 8,956
1972	11,132	10,636
1973	13,565	12,628

The average salary (not total compensation) of members of the College and Conservatory faculty in 1970-71 was $13,882. The "cut-off point" for Oberlin financial aid is a family annual income of about $18,000, though that point varies with the number of children a family has in college. We have not kept statistics on the average family income of our total student body, but we do know that in the class of 1973, 35 per cent are receiving some aid (a decline from 45 per cent for the class of 1967), and therefore that 65 per cent have family incomes above about $18,000. On the other hand, fewer than one per cent of our students have family incomes below $6,000, and only two per cent between $6,000 and $9,000. The median family income in the country in 1970 was $8,730.*

*Current Population Reports, July 27, 1971, Ser. P-60, #7a.

This brief review makes it clear that the Oberlin of 1971 is segregated: without having intended it, we find ourselves mainly serving the children of the upper-middle class. Our high costs have produced on our campus a form of de facto economic segregation.

We may note that most careful studies* show a low but significant

*For a summary see John K. Folger, Helen S. Astin, and Alan E. Buyer, Human Resources and Higher Education, pp. 307-309 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970).

correlation between socio-economic status and ability. Thus, on a statistical basis our economic segregation provides us with more able students than if we were to deal with groups lower on the economic scale, and, of course, it eases our financial strains considerably. Setting aside the question of whether it is morally right for us to make our educational resources available primarily to children of the well-to-do, and the related question of whether it would be consistent with Oberlin's history and traditions to do so, we may ask whether our economic segregation has any direct detrimental effect on our educational enterprise. There are grounds for thinking that the answer to this last question is affirmative.

(2) College attendance: voluntary or involuntary? In the recent past college attendance was regarded as a privilege. It has increasingly come to be viewed as a right, though not yet as an obligation for all. Currently about one-half of all high school graduates in the United States enter a college or university. In some states, e.g., California, and among the upper-middle class, the proportion may exceed eighty per cent.

Also in the recent past the public universities admitted large numbers of students who had little interest in learning for its own sake but who in many instances were motivated to acquire a B.A. degree as a vehicle for their rise in the world. The selective private colleges, in contrast, admitted students who were not only bright and interested in learning for its own sake, but who viewed the B.A. degree as a ticket for admission to the best graduate schools. For example, in the decade 1958-68 well over seventy per cent of Oberlin's male graduates went directly to graduate school. (See Part A, Appendix (p. 23). This combination of student ability and motivation made the selective colleges exciting places in which to learn and teach.

We may suspect, however, that young people today differ in important ways from those of even a decade ago, and this must influence the conduct of higher education in the country. For example, only about 43 per cent of Oberlin's male graduates in the class of 1970 went directly to graduate school. Oberlin continues to admit intellectually-able students, as our yearly SAT averages document, but the "first-year out" figures show that they are not doing the same things upon leaving Oberlin that students were doing just a few years ago. Many faculty and students sense a noticeably-decreased motivation for college work on the part of many of today's students. The reasons for this change are complex and not well understood, and we have no way of knowing whether this perceived trend will continue or reverse itself. Nevertheless, we can suggest at least a part of an answer to the question of why motivation may have declined among liberal arts students.

Many bright young people today have obviously rejected the social end that has long been associated with college education, namely, a place in the establishment in the broadest sense. It may be no wonder, then, that they are less interested in what appear to be the means to that end. Some students from upper-middle-class backgrounds, furthermore, may feel that they need not be overly concerned about vocational training or social mobility. This line of thought, of course, prompts the question of why they still attend college, if, indeed, they have little interest in the social end associated with it. While many of our students are here because of an interest in learning, the attendance of some may be influenced by a combination of the following factors:

(a) College attendance is expected of the intellectually-able children of the middle and upper-middle classes by their friends and parents. Many of these students have never seriously considered any other course, perhaps for some of the other reasons we list here.

(b) There is a distinct lack of attractive alternatives to college for eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds.

(c) College provides a four-year santuary, usually with people of one's own age and background, from the "real world."

(d) For young men college attendance has offered perhaps the least distasteful way of avoiding the draft.

(e) Even many students who reject the social end mentioned above may still be practical enough to see that a college degree will continue to be a requisite for most of the attractive jobs in society.

For these and other reasons one can make a case that college attendance for most of Oberlin's students is relatively involuntary. For many there simply may be no clear alternative. It has been argued*

*By Martin Trow ("Reflections on the transition from mass to universal higher education," in Daedalus, Winter 1970, pp. 1-42), to whom credit is given for several of the ideas expressed in this paper.

that voluntary attendance carries an implicit acceptance of the character and purpose of the institution as defined by its authorities. In contrast, involuntary attendance carries no such implication, and attempts to re-define the institution's methods and goals by those obliged to attend are inevitable. When relatively involuntary attendance at college is coupled in the student's mind with serious doubts as to the value of a college education and degree, an unhealthy situation exists. It can be argued that it is the children of the upper-middle class who can most afford to indulge in doubt regarding the value of college, yet who are under the most pressure to attend.

(3) Americans by-passed by Oberlin. At the same time that the selective colleges admit larger numbers of students who may not be sufficiently interested in liberal arts education and a college degree, there exist large groups of persons whose education stopped at high school but who have the ability and motivation required for college work. Of course, most of them simply cannot afford the cost of education at Oberlin. As examples, the following categories of persons are unrepresented or very poorly represented on our campus:

(a) Graduates of community colleges. Some of these individuals have proven themselves to be among the most highly motivated students in American higher education.

(b) Returning veterans. American colleges and universities appear to have learned little from their experience with the veterans who attended them after World War II and the Korean War. In general, these were highly successful students, even though many of them had previously been tagged academic "losers."

(c) Blue-collar workers. Many persons employed in factories and industrial plants might bring the same degree of motivation to an opportunity for education as did the returning veterans of the past.

(d) Persons older than 22. For example, there may be a large pool of black men and women in their twenties who have the ability and motivation for college work but who missed the drive to increase minority enrollments. In general, there is no reason to think that a man of 25 who has been working since age eighteen but for whom Oberlin represents a last chance to rise in society would be a worse risk than an average eighteen-year-old Oberlin freshman. Which one needs our educational facilities more?

(e) Married students. By aiming almost exclusively at the 18-22 year range, by charging a high tuition, and by failing to provide adequate housing for couples, American private colleges effectively discriminate against married students.

(f) Qualified persons in the community. Doubtless there are many persons in the area (including Cleveland) who could and would study part-time at Oberlin if our tuition were not more than $100 per credit hour for schedules of fewer than ten hours.

(g) Children of parents who did not attend college. Although statistics are not available, we suspect that a relatively small percentage of our students are the first members of their families to attend college.

It seems possible that the introduction of sizable numbers of persons from these neglected groups, if done carefully and selectively, could not only sharply reduce our existing segregation by economic level, age, and marital status, but might also bring to our campus a group of persons who were highly motivated. A new Oberlin with a truly diverse and highly motivated student body could be a more stimulating place to teach and learn.

The preceding discussion suggests that Oberlin is failing its heritage by serving almost exclusively the children of the upper-middle class. This segregation, we also suggest, may in present circumstances bring to our campus a significant number of persons who are not motivated to acquire a liberal arts education or a college degree.

It may be that all this places Oberlin at a crucial point in its history, faced with a decision of major importance. Shall we define as our continuing purpose the education of upper-middle class students?

Or shall we end de facto economic segregation in such a way as to make our resources available only to those who have sufficient interest, need, and motivation to use them to the very best of their ability? How can we reach out to those who genuinely want and need what we have to offer? How can we achieve, as Kingman Brewster has put it, an "all-volunteer campus"?

(4) Financing and equal opportunity. It is obvious that a large drop in the number of students whose parents are paying Oberlin's full tuition would have serious financial consequences. How can we remain financially strong, yet admit many more students who require aid? The following are some possibilities for increased support fron old and new sources.

(a) Increased state and federal aid. If Oberlin were to move away from the present geographic diversity among its students, and concentrate on attracting Ohio students of diverse backgrounds and ages, our financial problem would be eased. This is due to the fact that among students requiring any aid from Oberlin, the lowest-income student from Ohio requires the least, as explained below:

For example, an Ohio student with a family income of under $7,500 is eligible for $3,250 in state and federal aid in 1971-72. He can save $500 in a summer, and will need only a $700 scholarship to meet our costs of $4,450. If one-fourth of all our students were in this category they would require about $400,000 in scholarships, which is about one-fourth of our total aid expenditure. In a few states aid for education is provided to residents who attend college out-of-state, so not all our low-income students would have to come from Ohio.

Federal aid to education will increase, but it is too early to say how and at what rate.

(b) Improved economy of operation of the College. This might be brought about in part by the move to year-round operation with a concurrent increase in the total size of the student body, as proposed in Ch. 5 of this report.

(c) Income-contingent loans. Programs of deferred-payment, income-contingent loans are underway at Yale and Duke, and are under careful study by the Ford Foundation. Under these programs the borrower contracts to repay his loan at a given per cent of his future yearly income, and thus his payments will be low if his income is low. Further, a maximum repayment period is stipulated and the balance of the loan is excused when the end of the period is reached. This means that some will pay more than others, mutualizing the risk of low income and effectively subsidizing some low-income borrowers. There can be many variations on this theme. Considerable legal and administrative problems may be involved in operating such a program. Critics argue that these programs will utlimately reduce government support of higher education in other ways, especially if the government elects to run its own PAYE program. Nevertheless, it now appears probable that income-contingent loans will be an important new source of funds for low-income students.

(d) A new program of corporation and trade-union support of an equal opportunity program. The Commission has considered how major corporations, in some ways the principal beneficiaries of higher education, could be called upon for larger and more direct support. For example, a number of major U.S. corporations, such as U.S. Steel, DuPont, Alcoa, I.B.M., General Motors, and others, might be approached for substantial grants to help endow the Oberlin Equal Opportunity Program. Oberlin College would contract annually with each of the corporations to admit for full-time study a certain number of their blue-collar workers, who would be selected by the corporation and relevant trade union. Thus we might contract with U.S. Steel to admit to Oberlin a specific number of their employees per year, the employees to be selected by that corporation and the United Steelworkers of America from their entire national blue-collar work force. We may also wish to explore the possibility that some trade unions might establish a program of their own of this general nature.

This plan would have advantages for all parties concerned: (i) It would allow the corporations and unions to underwrite a bold move in higher education, with considerable publicity resulting for them and for our program. (ii) The most able and motivated of the blue-collar workers would benefit directly from the opportunity to gain a college education and degree. Many of them would move up to white-collar jobs, or to leadership positions in their unions, benefiting themselves, the corporation, and the union. (iii) Oberlin could find itself with a few hundred highly motivated adults with considerable maturity and experience in life, though they might in some cases require special preparation. Each of these persons would have made a major decision in coming to Oberlin, and they would be here to pursue a liberal arts education and earn a college degree. (iv) The financial support from the corporations and unions might be just what is required to make the whole program financially viable. (v) By accepting students from corporations such as DuPont and I.B.M. which need trained scientists and mathematicians, we could perhaps insure ourselves a supply of motivated students in our science and mathematics departments.

(e) Alumni support. Alumni gifts to the College have been relatively low. One of the reasons may be that neither Oberlin as an institution nor its typical student has been able to demonstrate a truly convincing financial need. When 97 per cent of our students have family incomes above $9,000 and 65 per cent above $18,000, perhaps our alumni (and others) are not persuaded to give. If we find and enroll able and motivated students with a very obvious financial need, and make this fundamental change clear to our alumni, we may have a much stronger basis for our appeal.

It may be possible to formalize alumni support of an equal-opportunity program in the following way. (i) We first establish a number of Alumni Equal Opportunity Scholarships, to be supported by new or

re-designated alumni contributions. (ii) Each alumni contribution constitutes a specified fraction of the financial-aid package for a particular person admitted under the program. Instead of appealing for donations to be used to support the program overall, we ask for alumni to donate 1/10 or 1/4 or all, etc., of the cost of a scholarship to a typical student requiring aid. (iii) We report to each sponsor of the program the use to which his donation was put. For example, to the member of the class of '50 we report, "Your gift of $500 was used to pay one-fifth of the tuition charges of a first-generation college woman graduate of Lorain Community College. The rest of her financial-aid package was sub-divided as follows:"

(f) Foundation support. If we launch an Oberlin Equal Opportunity Program in the right way, we may be able to obtain support from a major foundation. The Ford Foundation, for example, has been extremely active in supporting higher education for members of racial minorities. We would be asking foundations for help in aiding other groups of persons whose presence on the campuses of selective private colleges is even more unusual than was that of black students a few years ago.

(g) Work-study program. A major work-study cooperative-education program of the Antioch or Berea types is not proposed, for two reasons. (i) The high unemployment rate in the country makes it appear unlikely that many jobs for students for short periods could be found. (ii) Many of the persons who would enroll under an equal opportunity program would already have had considerable job experience. They would want, and perhaps deserve, to proceed with their education as fast as they wish.

However, for many of Oberlin's present students, who have proceeded directly to college from high school, perhaps nothing would be more valuable than working for six months or a year. Oberlin could develop a small-scale work-study program under the new calendar proposed in Ch. 5 of this report. Perhaps small industries or even cooperative farms could be developed in the area. Alumni support might be enlisted to find jobs for some students who wished to participate in the program, and the money earned by them could be used in meeting their college expenses. But the main benefit of working in the "real world" for our present students would be an educational one. Indeed, we might be wise to expect every future recipient of an Oberlin degree to have done something other than proceed directly from high school to college to graduation. This expectation could be waived by petition and for those entering under the equal opportunity program.